United Nations S/PV.6841

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6841st meeting

Wednesday, 26 September 2012, 2.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Westerwelle	(Germany)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mammadyarov
	China	Mr. Yang Jiechi
	Colombia	Ms. Holguín Cuéllar
	France	Mr. Fabius
	Guatemala	Mr. Caballeros
	India	Mr. Mathai
	Morocco	Mr. El Othmani
	Pakistan	Mr. Jilani
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	South Africa	Ms. Nkoana-Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Ohin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hague
	United States of America	Mrs. Rodham Clinton

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

High-level meeting of the Security Council on peace and security in the Middle East

Letter dated 6 September 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/686)

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Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 2.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

High-level meeting of the Security Council on peace and security in the Middle East

Letter dated 6 September 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/686)

The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, ministers and other representatives here in the Chamber. Their presence is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter to be addressed.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/686, which contains a letter dated 6 September 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Since Germany began its current term in the Security Council, in January 2011, we have witnessed a dramatic change across the Near and Middle East. The people in the region have expressed their hopes for dignity, democracy, economic and social participation, prosperity and respect of their fundamental human rights. At the beginning, we spoke of the Arab Spring. We have learned that it would be better to speak of Arab seasons.

The movement for change in the Arab world has not followed the same pattern in every country. Indeed, more than ever, the situation differs from one country to another, but the process of change continues.

We are all concerned about the recent turmoil in many Arab countries in response to a shameful anti-Islam video. Let me be very clear.

I can understand very well that believers feel deeply offended by that horrible and shameful video, but the response to such provocations cannot be violence. There is no justification for violence and murder.

What we are witnessing now is not a confrontation of religions, nor is it a clash of cultures. What we are witnessing is a clash within societies. It is a struggle of the open-minded with the closed-minded. It is a struggle of the reasonable with the fundamentalists. It is a clash of the peaceful with the violent. This week has to serve to strengthen those in all societies all over the world who stand up for respect and tolerance, for those who know that freedom and responsibility are but two sides of the same coin. There is no doubt about where Germany stands. Now more than ever, we are with those who work for peace. We see the challenges, but we believe in the historic opportunities that the change in the Arab world is opening up. Germany's offer of a transformation partnership to provide education, jobs and growth continues to stand.

The League of Arab States has assumed a leading role with regard to regional peace and security. It has taken a clear stance on the conflicts in Syria and Libya. For the Syrian people, however, the prospect for peace still seems a distant dream. As the international community, we must be united to stop the violence and help initiate a process of political transition. We must find a common response. We owe it to the people. We appreciate the active leadership of the Arab League to halt the killing in Syria.

The change in the Arab world has made peace in the Middle East more urgent than ever. Negotiations are the way to achieve a two-State solution that satisfies the legitimate demands on both sides — the Israelis and the Palestinians. We must therefore ensure that the peace process remains a priority on the international agenda. By endorsing the Saudi Peace Initiative the League of Arab States has made a constructive offer that is of critical importance.

We believe that it is necessary to solidify and develop the cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League. The commitment of the Arab League to the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter is the basis for more cooperation. Above all, more focus is needed on what we can achieve together in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution. We need practical progress. For instance, we could think about more frequent briefings and consultations with representatives of the League of Arab States. I would also welcome the establishment of a United Nations office in Cairo to improve cooperation with the secretariat of the Arab League.

The time has come. As the Arab world undergoes historical change, let us seize the opportunity to open a new chapter of cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: We meet at a time of historic and often inspirational change in the Middle East and North Africa. Several momentous transitions in the Arab World are under way, moving ahead with difficulty but in the clear direction of the freedoms that had been denied for so long.Yet, as old orders crumble and new ones struggle to emerge, this is also a time of widespread apprehension and tragic violence.

The peace process between Israelis and Palestinians remains stalemated, as the window for a two-State solution narrows dangerously. The League of Arab States Arab Peace Initiative remains an important part of the framework aimed at ending the occupation and achieving a long overdue agreement. I count on the continued generosity of the League's members in providing financial support for the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East at this time of need. I urge members and other members of the international community to do more in both regards.

In Syria the conflict has become a threat to regional and international peace and security. A human tragedy is unfolding in full view, but also in the darkness of prisons, under the rubble of entire neighbourhoods and in the traumatized minds of children. I appeal to all with influence to persuade the parties that there is no military solution to this crisis.

Tensions in the region are also inflamed over nuclear issues. Members of the Council should do their part to discourage any escalation and to insist on peaceful solutions that respect the United Nations Charter and international law.

There has also been unrest linked to an act of hatred towards one religion that has caused both understandable offence and unacceptable violence.

Against that complex backdrop, I welcome this high-level discussion on the partnership between the League and the Council.

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter provides vast opportunities for regional organizations. The Security Council long ago recognized the vital role they can play in consolidating peace agreements and enhancing peace and stability.

With a new political era at hand in the Arab world, the Arab League has acquired a new sense of purpose. The League was among the first organizations to publicly acknowledge that the Tunisian revolution was rooted in economic and social disparities and the aspiration for greater freedom and justice. The League was also among the first organizations to condemn the atrocities committed by the former Libyan regime and to urge the international community to take action.

Both the United Nations and the League worked to help ensure the transparency of landmark elections in Tunisia and Libya. Our joint role has been most prominent in Syria. Members of the Arab League made significant contributions to the United Nations military observer Mission. Of course, we together appointed, first, Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan and, subsequently, Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, as our emissaries in the search for a political solution. Those mediation efforts need solid and concrete support from the Council.

Looking ahead, I see four areas that merit special attention.

First, let us improve the exchange of information. Dialogue between our secretariats should be focused and frequent. Another avenue for enhanced contacts may prove to be the placement of the Office of the Joint Special Representative for Syria and his deputy in Cairo — a possibility that is being explored.

Secondly, we should put conflict prevention at the centre of our agenda. The United Nations continues to strengthen its ability to act early while helping regional organizations build capacity for facilitation, mediation and dialogue.

Thirdly, let us explore new areas for collaboration. The Middle East holds vast potential for the development of sustainable energy; let us explore what more we can do in the context of my Sustainable Energy for All initiative. Our relationship need not be limited to political action on the immediate crises of the day.

Fourthly, let us ensure the success of the transitions that have been set in motion. We must continue to be ready to provide concrete assistance, if and when requested. Outsiders can share their experience and encourage progress — humbly, patiently and respectfully — but the major work has to be done by, and in each, society.

At this tumultuous time for the Arab region, people are looking to our organizations to be on their side in the fight for justice, dignity and opportunity.

The League of Arab States is a trusted partner of the United Nations. I look forward to working even more closely with the League to realize the aspirations of people across the arc of the United Nations membership.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Elaraby (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to my dear friend Guido Westerwelle, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany and current President of the Security Council, for his initiative in holding this high-level meeting of the Security Council to debate the situation in the Middle East and the means to strengthen relations of cooperation and joint action between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Such an initiative embodies an important principle set out in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which encourages regional organizations to tackle issues in their regions by turning to the Security Council to find peaceful solutions to conflict and to maintain international peace and security.

On many occasions the Security Council has moved in that direction. It has adopted resolutions supporting such cooperation, most notably resolution 1631 (2005), whose paragraph 7 refers to regular meetings between the Security Council and regional organizations in order to promote cooperation in maintaining international peace and security. In that context I must stress that transparency, clarity and frankness are the bases required for any cooperation between the Security Council and such parties, so allow me to speak transparently and to be clear and frank about the crucial need for a dialogue between the League of Arab States and the Security Council.

The League of Arab States, which was established before the United Nations, believes that a fundamental pillar for international peace and security is the effectiveness and credibility of the Security Council, as well as the full, faithful and precise implementation of resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly those of the Council. The League believes that non-implementation of those resolutions is one of the fundamental reasons for tension and instability, both regionally and internationally.

The involvement of the Security Council in Arab issues is very old, going back to the birth of the United Nations itself. Resolutions have been adopted for more than six decades on Palestine, which is the fundamental, central issue for the Arab world and has been the fundamental cause of tension and instability in the region for many decades, persisting as one of the oldest unresolved issues in the international arena. The League has always stressed that a just, durable and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the question of Palestine at its core, will only be achieved through a complete and faithful implementation of Security Council resolutions.

Those resolutions have addressed all aspects of the conflict. The Council has adopted many resolutions on ending Israeli occupation of occupied Arab lands, particularly resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); resolutions on the legitimacy of building settlements on Palestinian land, the most important being perhaps resolution 446 (1979) and resolution 252 (1968) on the non-recognition of unilateral measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in Al-Quds Al-Sharif; resolutions on the occupied Syrian Arab Golan; and resolutions relating to ending Israeli occupation of the remaining occupied land in southern Lebanon. It has also adopted resolutions asserting that the basis for a settlement on the Palestinian track runs through the establishment of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side within secure, internationally recognized borders.

Those resolutions have not been implemented. Tension and instability have continued in the Middle East. The Palestinian people are the only people in the world whose issue has not been resolved and who have not obtained their right to their legitimate self-determination, freedom and independence, or indeed to set up their own independent State.

The time has come for us to review our calculations regarding the way in which we tackle the issue and to review the approach of the past, which has been one based on conflict management rather than on ending conflict. That requires, inter alia, avoiding double standards. It requires avoiding dual measures. With the exception of one or two resolutions adopted in the 1940s — and more than 200 have been adopted since then — how strange that not a single one has the Council acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. We therefore very much want the Security Council to review the matter, and soon.

The Syrian crisis is deteriorating and escalating day by day. The fact that the Syrian Government persists in seeking a military security solution, including through the use of heavy weapons and military aircraft against its own people, and the fact that it refuses to respond to all initiatives, including the initiatives of the League of Arab States, have now confronted us with a serious and tragic situation. More innocent Syrians continue to be killed. The number of refugees flooding neighbouring States is increasing. The spectre of a sectarian civil war darkens Syria's skies and indeed the skies of the entire region and provides a warning of a potential regional and international catastrophe that will affect all and take years to resolve, involving threats to international peace and security as well.

The League of Arab States has been eager to cooperate with the United Nations to resolve the crisis from the very beginning. Indeed, a Joint Special Envoy was appointed by the two organizations in a new initiative based on joint action. The League of Arab States has turned to the Security Council and called on it, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the powers entrusted to it, to maintain international peace and security; to take the necessary measures to compel the implementation of the resolutions adopted by this very Council; to implement the plan set out by Kofi Annan, the former Joint Special Envoy of the League and the United Nations; to implement the final document of the 30 June meeting of the Action Group on Syria in Geneva, which was agreed by consensus and with the participation of the Permanent Five of the Security Council; and to lay the foundation on which to begin a political transformation in Syria towards a democratic regime that responds to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. We believe that the very first step is to stop the bloodshed in Syria, so as to begin the transformation leading to a healthy democratic regime that responds to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people to a life of freedom and dignity.

However, once again, the Security Council failed to achieve any of those objectives because of a disagreement among the permanent members, which is, frankly, most lamentable. And, I regret to say this, those resolutions have remained dead letters; they are not being implemented. The serial killing, bloodshed and destruction continue unabated. Let me state to Council members very clearly: if we want the mission of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, to succeed, the Security Council must support him in deeds, not just in words. And it can do so by compelling implementation of its resolutions in a way that is binding on all parties. Binding resolutions must be implemented in a binding manner.

The challenges confronting peace and security, on which we may cooperate, are many and multifaceted. Some are traditional, some are nascent and spreading rapidly in this era of developing modern technology. In the past few years, the world has witnessed very disturbing events because of actions that insult Islam and our Prophet. We fully reject and condemn the violent reactions in some Arab countries, including irresponsible and reprehensible attacks against some foreign embassies and facilities, acts that most regrettably led to the killing of the United States Ambassador to Libya and other innocent citizens. While we reject such actions, which are not in any way justifiable, we would like to sound the alarm that insulting religions, faiths, and their symbols is, indeed, a matter that threatens international peace and security.

The Charter of the United Nations begins with, "We the peoples of the United Nations", thereby establishing the principle that relations among people are the basis of international peace and security. Therefore, the international community must firmly deal with anything that returns us to the abhorrent concept of racism. We prize the values of freedom of expression. We believe that such principles must be respected and maintained. However, we do not see any relation between freedom of expression, which aims at enriching culture and building civilization, on the one hand, and activities that merely offend and insult the beliefs, cultures and civilizations of others, activities that incite hatred and violence. If the International Bill of Human Rights protects freedom of religion and faith, it is not merely affirming the right to build houses of worship and practise a faith, it is also stating the right of religionsto be treated with deference. Faiths must be respected and not abused or insulted. Since the international community has criminalized bodily harm, it must criminalize psychological and spiritual harm as well.

It is now clear that insulting religions and faiths is a phenomenon that threatens international peace, security and stability. The League of Arab States calls for the establishment of a binding international legal framework, based on resolution 1618 (2005), in order to combat the denigration of religions and ensure that religious faiths and their symbols are respected. Such a framework would also be based on articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We must work together towards a dialogue that increases understanding between cultures and civilizations and encourages tolerance. Cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Security Council, on the one hand, and the League of Arab States, on the other, to confront the challenges in the Middle East should take various forms. In Yemen, efforts must be intensified to support the Government in overcoming the consequences of the political crisis and its economic repercussions and to move forward towards reconstruction and rebuilding the State. As for the situation in Libya, we hope that the appointment of Mr. Tarek Mitri as the new Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya will help to promote cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and its representatives in Libya, to provide assistance to the Libyan people in rebuilding the State and reconstructing the country.

The cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Somalia deserves credit for successfully ending the transitional period in Somalia and has initiated the creation of permanent institutions. There has been success in Darfur and in the relations between the Sudan and South Sudan where tensions must not be allowed to return. Therefore, the League of Arab States has set out an initiative to support the humanitarian situation, in both Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states, in cooperation with the United Nations and the African Union and with the support of the Security Council. I hope that President Al-Bashir and President Salva Kiir will reach a definitive agreement on the controversial issues in Addis Ababa, and I hope that this Council will give the necessary time to do so.

Let me take this important opportunity to refer to a serious challenge facing our region. At the end of this year, we are to take a step long awaited by the world. It is a practical move towards establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We believe that it will mark the beginning of the road towards an international conference to be held in Helsinki with the participation of all States of the Middle East. Three permanent members of the Security Council and the Secretary-General have a mandate to organize the conference. It requires the formal support of the Council. We believe that the establishment of such a zone would eliminate the spectre of a conflagration with the use of non-conventional weapons in our region.

In dealing with the Middle East, we should not look upon it merely asa region of conflict and threats, for it is also a region full of hope, aspirations and possibilities. The challenges confronting it are multifaceted. There are political and military challenges, but there are also development and humanitarian challenges. Cooperation on all those and other issues requires updating and review and moreeffective relations between the League of Arab States and the United Nations, as well as new mechanisms. I should like to put forward some proposals in that regard.

First, we believe that the agreement on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States (General Assembly resolution 44/7) signed in 1989 must be updated to keep up with priorities and emerging and future challenges. Secondly, regular meetings, as well as those required by events, should be held between the Security Council and the League of Arab States, represented by the presidency of the Arab Summit Conference, the presidency of the Council of Ministers of the League, and the Secretary General of the League. Thirdly, the status of the cooperation meetings held between the United Nations and the League of Arab State needs to be enhanced so as to enable them to deliver programmes which are effective, particularly with regard to preventing and resolving disputes and peacekeeping. Fourthly, greater importance must be attached to cooperation between the two organizations relating to humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, I reiterate my thanks and appreciation to the President of the Council for his initiative to hold this high-level meeting. At the same time, allow me to thank all of the Ministers who have travelled from afar to participate in the meeting. I hope that it signals the beginning of a new interaction between the two organizations to support peace and security in the Middle East, with a view to transforming the region from one of conflict and crises to one of security and stability, whose peoples enjoy peace and prosperity, as well as one capable of regaining its historic status as a source of knowledge and a beacon of human civilization. Throughout the world, the Security Council is considered the source of international peace and security, and I hope that will prove to be the case.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Saad-Eddine El Othmani, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. El Othmani (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany for his initiative in organizing this open debate on the issue of peace and security in the Middle East and cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States towards achieving objectives common to both organizations. We reiterate to them the confidence and support of the Kingdom of Morocco in their efforts. In that respect, the Middle East region has, over the centuries, been the cradle of civilization that enriched the heritage of man. It was also the stage for a number of clashes that degenerated into fully-fledged conflicts and from which the peoples of the region have suffered and continue to suffer today.

The ongoing crisis of the Palestinian people lies at the very heart of the problem of achieving peace and security in the Middle East region and holds back the present and future of entire generations. That is why urgent action to resolve the conflict is necessary. Despite ongoing efforts over the past few years, the current conflict remains unresolved, owing to Israel's intransigence. At the same time, movements recently seen in the region aimed at achieving the legitimate aspirations of peoples for democracy and freedom necessitate an understanding of such aspirations.

My country welcomes the cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and considers the bolstering of such cooperation as more necessary than ever today. That is because we have seen developments in the actions of the League of Arab States and a renewed determination to strengthen the role of the League in serving the peoples of the region. As we have seen in the case of the crisis in Syria, the League of Arab States has proven that it can act effectively.

We highly appreciate the German presidency's initiative to issue a presidential statement calling for tangible measures to promote such cooperation. I commend the measures highlighted by the Secretary General of the League of Arab States on the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative.

We must spend a few minutes considering the Palestinian question, which, today more than ever, deserves particular attention. It is unfortunate that Israel has continued its systematic defiance of United Nations resolutions. In that respect, we must take note of the settlement construction policy, as it is a flagrant violation of international law and the Geneva Conventions. That policy has become a major obstacle to the peace process. It reflects disdain for international agreements and even undermines the peace process. Moreover, we must consider the acts of violence committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinian citizens. It is unfortunate that the response of the international community has fallen far short of justice for those people.

Let us also not forget the suffering of the thousands of Palestinian prisoners, some of whom have been detained or imprisoned since before the signing of the Oslo Agreements in 1993. In spite of all of that, the issue remains as yet unresolved.

There are also Israel's attempts to alter the demographic and cultural nature of the city of Jerusalem. In spite of the efforts of the international community, the settlement construction has continued in East Jerusalem, including ongoing work on the Al-Aqsa mosque compound. In spite of all of the appeals, Israel has continued its operations to destroy other sites that hold particular importance for the three monotheistic religions.

Facing all of those challenges, the King of Morocco, His Majesty Mohammed VI, presides over the Jerusalem Committee. The Kingdom of Morocco therefore calls for a halt to all of the construction work, which continues to destroy important sites, as well as all activities against the Islamic nature of the city. In addition, we urge the international community to take urgent action to protect the cultural heritage of Jerusalem.

Certain ongoing Israeli policies consist of imposing sanctions against the Palestinian people and thus reflect disdain for all international instruments and international law. The closure policy carried out in the occupied Palestinian territories and the ongoing inhuman blockades conducted in the Gaza Strip since 2006 have all led to a humanitarian crisis of intolerable suffering that worsens each day.

Speaking in this forum and based upon our profound conviction of the importance of establishing peace and security in the region, we note the fact that our goal requires Israel's acknowledgment of the law and renunciation of its hostile policies against the defenceless Palestinian people, which seek to impose a logic of force as well as a fait accompli. We call on the international community to urge Israel to respect international agreements and those reached between the parties concerned.

We cannot omit to mention the suffering of our brothers the Syrian people. In that regard, we wish to express our indignation at and condemnation of the violence inflicted by the Syrian regime against civilians. We must reaffirm the necessity of bringing an immediate end to those acts of violence, in order to launch a political process that involves every sector of Syrian society and thus to achieve the Syrian people's aspirations to a politically democratic, pluralist regime based on a framework of the national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, with no foreign military intervention.

In that regard, I would like to reaffirm the importance of international and Arab efforts to find a settlement for the Syrian crisis, including through the mission of the Joint Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. Indeed, we commend all the efforts being made to resolve this crisis. Morocco will host the fourth meeting of the Group of the Friends of Syria at the end of this month, and we hope that the meeting will help to mitigate the terrifying nightmare of the Syrian people.

The Middle East faces many challenges today that the Security Council is required to attempt to resolve, by virtue of its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, in order to help foster an atmosphere of peace and prosperity in the region. There is no doubt that acts that insult Islam, and any kind of disdain or attack on its Prophet or religion or incitement to hatred, all take us further away from the principle of tolerance and the essential virtues of dialogue and respect. We repudiate such acts of provocation, just as we repudiate any act of violence targeting innocent victims or property. I would like to recall that the Kingdom of Morocco, at the highest levels, condemned the attack on the American Consulate in Benghazi that led to the deaths of the United States Ambassador to Libya and three of the consular staff. We also call for respect for holy sites and property.

Once again, we reiterate that the cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations is vital, and we hope that it will grow deeper.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Laurent Fabius, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic.

Mr. Fabius (France) (*spoke in French*): I have some observations to make on this very important subject. My first, which I think we would all agree on, is that when the Arab Spring, as we call it, began almost two years ago, it gave rise at the start to many hopes for peace, dignity, freedom and democracy. Today, however, we are concerned. We are concerned about violence, extremism, radicalization, exploitation of religious beliefs and certain groups' willingness to provoke confrontation between Islam and the West.

It seems to me that in the face of such challenges, there are few possible positions — indeed, only one or two — to take. Certainly that is France's understanding. We should show solidarity with these movements, because in those of our countries where there have been revolutions, even when the circumstances have been different, we know from experience that revolutions go through highs and lows. Events are never linear, and we must show our solidarity with the best parts of such movements, while at the same time — and I stress this point — maintaining high expectations. That is because the way in which the Arab spring has sometimes progressed, and sometimes gone off the rails, shows that we should be very careful about a number of central issues: human rights, women's rights, the rejection of terrorism and respect for communities and minorities. That is the first comment I have to make, which I think will be shared by everyone here.

My second observation concerns Syria. It would be strange if we did not mention this tragic situation. When I was preparing this short statement, I wrote that on that day, the conflict had resulted in 27,000 deaths. We understand from recent reports that the number is now 30,000, and according to our Joint Special Representative, Mr. Brahimi, it is growing.

I am sure we all agree that it is shocking to international public opinion that we, the Security Council of the United Nations, have so far been unable to ensure the unity and security of these nations. I will not point a finger, but it is shocking that so far the Council has been unable to act. I would like to emphasize two risks, which are not mutually exclusive, in the Syrian crisis. If the situation continues, there is a very high risk that Syria will explode, and I use that expression advisedly. And everyone who wishes to see stability in a region that has already been profoundly affected will find that it is a dramatic explosion and one for which, at that point, there will be no solution. At the same time, we run the risk — already partly a reality — that extremism will gain ground. We all here have the same information: whatever beliefs any one of us may hold, we must acknowledge that there are extremists who have invaded Syrian territory.

In that regard, I would like to make another observation. If, as we sometimes do, we could discuss matters among ourselves, away from the cameras, I know of no one in the Council who would support the notion that Bashar Al-Assad's regime will ultimately still be there. I do not want to mention anyone in particular, but no one with whom I have discussed the issue would support the possibility of Mr. Al-Assad's remaining in place for any length of time; yet he is still there.

So that is the question: since we know that this regime will come to an end — and from the point of view of France, the sooner the better — how can we reconcile those two things? He is there, but he must go. How can we ensure that that happens in the most peaceful manner possible and without plunging the country into even worse chaos? As it stands, we have not been able to provide an answer to that, but what the entire world has been demanding of us is to live up to our name. The Security Council should be able, we hope, to provide an answer in the next few weeks.

France, for its part, has mobilized its efforts in several areas: humanitarian and medical aid; the unification, as far as possible, of the Syrian resistance; and the consolidation of the liberated zones. We are ready to help on all those fronts.

Here I would like to highlight the remarkable role that Secretary General of the League of Arab States has played, since the beginning, in the Syrian crisis and the excellent cooperation that he has headed up with the United Nations. He has reacted quickly, firmly and with courage since the beginning of the crisis. He suspended Syria from the League, which was not easy. He did not hesitate to adopt sanctions to cut off the regime's financing and weapons supply routes. He introduced the idea of a political transition being necessary in Syria, a goal that is now at the heart of the mandate entrusted to our Joint Special Representative, Mr. Brahimi. When the Council decided to send an observation mission to Syria, it was able to benefit from the experience that the League had gained. The League launched an important process, which included Morocco's presentation of a draft resolution to the Council and the General Assembly's adoption of two resolutions presented by the Arab League (resolutions 66/253 A and B). Those resolutions were adopted by an overwhelming majority of Member States, thus confirming that Bashar Al-Assad's regime is isolated on all sides. I want, therefore, to pay tribute to the work that the Secretary General of the League has carried out, together with his colleagues, and take this opportunity to call on our Council once again to voice its complete confidence in Mr. Brahimi in carrying out his mission, which is, of course, very difficult.

The last point I would like to highlight, as others before me, is that it is impossible to deal with the issues facing the Arab world — and in a more general sense, the entire world — without highlighting the stalemate in the peace process between Israel and Palestine. France hopes for a relaunching of the peace process. We encourage the parties to return to negotiations. I reiterate once again that the goal must be to achieve an independent, viable and peaceful Palestinian State and to guarantee Israel's security. But here too I would caution that, for years and years — and this goes for all of us who were following this matter — we have known, deep down, what the solution was. The problem has been to get the parties to agree, and we did not succeed. But today, given the developments on the ground, the danger is that the solution itself could be compromised, and that danger is extremely serious.

I would like to again pay tribute to the commitment of the League of Arab States to resolving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. I would hope that solutions would be found very quickly to the Palestinian Authority's financial difficulties and thus progress would be made. I would add once again that there is no lasting peace without justice, and there will be no lasting peace in that area of the world if we do not ourselves provide a solution to the problem that has dragged on for decades.

I conclude by once again thanking our friend, Minister Guido Westerwelle, for having taken the initiative of holding this meeting. It enables us to reiterate the importance that we attach to the work of the League of Arab States and our hope that the United Nations and the League will be able to work increasingly well together, with full determination and success.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Mrs. Rodham Clinton (United States of America): I thank you very much, Minister Westerwelle, for calling us together at this critical moment to discuss peace and security in the Middle East on the heels of two tumultuous weeks, during which violent protests rocked countries across the region. Although anger was directed against my country, the protests exposed deep rifts within new democracies and volatility that extremists were quick to incite and exploit.

As President Obama made clear yesterday in his address to the General Assembly (see A/67/PV.6), the United States rejects the false choice between democracy and stability. Democracies make the strongest, most capable partners. We know that it takes a lot of hard work and oftentimes struggle, but the fact of new emerging democracies here in the twenty-first century should be cause for great satisfaction and hope.

These emerging democracies, however, need champions, not fair-weather friends. During this past week, as I met with leaders from Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen, I expressed to each of them America's unwavering support for their countries' continued journey along the democratic path. But making good on the promise of those transitions will take many hands working on many fronts. Of course, there are political and economic dimensions to the work that must be done, but today I would like to focus on the security concerns, because that has to be the starting line on the road to true democracy.

Of course, the Arab revolutions come from within, and the greatest responsibility for their success or failure lies with the people living them each day. But the nations gathered in this Chamber also have a powerful stake in seeing that those democracies succeed, and it is our shared responsibility to help countries in transition to find the right path forward.

International support is critical. Consider what happened when the League of Arab States and the Security Council came together to protect civilians in Libya. That show of solidarity helped produce a strong Security Council resolution (resolution 1973 (2011)) that saved Benghazi from destruction at the hands of a tyrant. Thanks to the support of that broad coalition, the people of Libya now have the chance to write their own future. We saw, earlier this year, Libyans turning out in droves to cast their ballots, most for the first time in their lives.

Then, this past Friday, we saw thousands of Libyans pour into the streets to condemn the attack on the United States diplomatic post in Benghazi that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans. They made it clear that those who would promote violence and division do not speak for the new Libya and that armed bands who would sever Libya's ties with the world are not welcome. The new Government of Libya is working closely with us to find the murderers and bring them to justice.

Now, each country in transition has its own security challenges, and therefore each one needs our support in different ways. In Tunisia, where the Arab awakening began, extremists seek to hijack its progress, but Tunisians are working steadily to dismantle a long legacy of dictatorship and lay the foundation for sustainable democracy. The riots underscored the challenges of building security forces focused on protecting people, not regimes. Those nations are not the first to struggle with the challenge of policing a new democracy, and the international community has stumbled in the past, failing to offer needed support or offering the wrong kind of support.

So we should heed the lessons we have learned from our successes and our failures, including this most basic understanding: training, funding and equipment will only go so far. It takes the political will to make hard choices and tough changes that will build strong institutions and lasting security, so I am pleased that Tunisia has agreed to host a new international training centre that will help security and criminal justice officials pursue policies grounded in the rule of law and human rights.

Egyptians chose their leadership for the first time in history, and we are committed to helping that transition succeed. The Egyptian people, proud of the freedoms they have claimed, must decide what kind of country they want to build, and the choices of the largest Arab nation will echo far beyond its borders. Like all nations, Egypt knows that it too has responsibilities, not only to its own citizens but also to its neighbours and the international community — responsibilities to honour international commitments, to share power broadly, to keep faith with all the Egyptian people, men and women, Muslim and Christian. We want to help Egypt and all new democracies live up to these vital responsibilities.

In Yemen, we are working through the Gulf Cooperation Council-led transition process. But providing basic security for the Yemeni people is a great challenge that is heightened by Yemen's unique needs. Yemen has a fast-growing population of young people and not enough jobs, a familiar story, not only through the region but the world. In addition, Yemen is facing the depletion of their oil and water supplies, and Al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula remains a serious threat. The urgency of these threats must be matched by the urgency of our response. In the Friends of Yemen meeting later this week, countries are coming together to address Yemen's challenges, in both the immediate and the long term.

Unfortunately, in the Syrian Arab Republic President Bashar Al-Assad clings to power, and his campaign of brutality has sparked a humanitarian crisis. The United States has committed more than $100 million to help the Syrian people, and we continue to insist that the violence must end and a political transition without President Al-Assad must move forward. The League of Arab States suspended Syria from its activities and has strongly condemned the Al-Assad regime's brutal violence against its own people. The Arab League created a plan for peaceful political transition that was endorsed by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, a resolution that launched Arab League and United Nations mediation efforts, led first by the Joint Special Envoy, Mr. Kofi Annan, and now by the Joint Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

Yet the atrocities mount while the Security Council remains paralysed. I would urge that we try once again to find a path forward that can bring the Security Council together on the urgent business of both ending the violence in Syria and preventing the consequences that all of us around this table fear.

Although this forum was not primarily intended to discuss the peace process, I certainly would like to reiterate United States President Barak Obama's message from yesterday. The future of Israel and Palestime must belong to those who embrace the hard work of peace, not those who thrive on conflict or who reject the right of Israel to exist. The United States stands ready and prepared to work towards a just agreement to finally accomplish our clear goal: a secure Jewish State of Israel and an independent, secure, prosperous Palestine, fulfilling the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

No discussion of the Middle East would be complete without a discussion of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the profound threat its activities pose to the region and beyond. Despite numerous demands by the Council, Iran still has not taken the necessary steps to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to resolve doubts about its nuclear programme. In addition, Iran continues to sponsor terrorist groups and smuggle weapons for the Al-Assad regime's use against the Syrian people. Meanwhile, the Iranian people themselves suffer gross violations of their rights at the hand of their own Government.

Syria's challenges, like these, call for leadership and partnership. Yesterday, I was privileged to sign an agreement with the Arab League through its Secretary General, Mr. Nabil Elaraby. I was delighted that Secretary General Elaraby and I could build on the unprecedented cooperation of the last two years. We support Germany's call to make Security Council and Arab League cooperation more systemic and sustainable. The United States is also one of 28 countries and international organizations working through the Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition to support democratic transitions in the Middle East and North Africa. When violence came to our doorstep at embassies around the globe, this body joined the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the African Union, and the European Union to give voice to the world's condemnation of the attacks and call for restraint. They stood with us and now we must stand together in support of the common aspirations of the people, of all people, for security and safety for our familites, the freedom to live lives according to our own conscience, the dignity that comes only through self-determination.

As President Obama said yesterday, the United States will never shrink from defending those values, and we will not walk away from those new democracies. We are not alone in this commitment. That is the work of all responsible nations, and we look forward to working closely with anyone who speaks out on behalf of our shared values.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa.

Ms. Nkoana-Mashabane (South Africa): South Africa expresses its appreciation to Germany, particularly to our colleague, Minister for Foreign Affairs Guido Westerville, for organizing this timely debate, which provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the peace and security situation in the Middle East, especially in light of current events taking place in the region. We wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, for their respective statements.

The Charter of the United Nations gives the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It also recognizes the complementarity between the roles of the United Nations and regional organizations in that respect. Political and strategic alignment between the Security Council and regional organizations has demonstrated effective results, as we have seen in the cases of Somalia and the Sudan. Coordination should be enhanced and become more formalized and structured, which is why South Africa has consistently championed the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

We also pioneered the adoption of resolution 2033 (2012) to further strengthen that relationship, particularly between the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Security Council. Cooperation between regional organizations is equally important, especially in instances in which there is overlapping membership, such as in the case of the League of Arab States and the African Union. In such situations, regional organizations should collaborate in developing close regional solutions to common challenges, such as resolution of conflicts. In that regard, we look forward to the joint consultative ministerial meeting between the Peace and Security Council of the AU and the League of Arab States scheduled to take place in New York on 27 September.

In the case of the Middle East, we have to recognize that the League of Arab States is the organization best placed to have a deeper appreciation of the dynamics within which conflicts in the Arab world take place and to provide conflict-specific solutions. South Africa appreciates the efforts of the League in promoting peace in the Middle East region, especially efforts at furthering the Middle East peace process, the oldest peace and security item on the agendas of both the United Nations and the League. It is therefore apt that the United Nations is strengthening its engagement with the League. The appointment of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria was demonstrative of that cooperation. It would also be appropriate for the Secretary-General, in consultation with the League, to explore modalities for further enhancing cooperation. In its cooperation with the League, the Council should be consistent and not selectively cooperate on matters that serve the national interests of some of its members.

The events in the Middle East over the past 19 months have had a significant impact on the region and the rest of the world. The complexities underlying those events underscore the fact that no individual countries or organizations can address the developments on their own. The need for cooperation among States and international organizations when dealing with cross-cutting issues of peace, security and development is therefore paramount.

Equally, the underlying causes of those uprisings, including long-standing conflicts, have to be addressed in a coordinated manner. In the Middle East, we have not seen such an approach. There has been swift international reaction to some, while in others such cooperation is lacking, and, as a result, there has been no significant movement towards resolving the conflict.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League on the Middle East peace process has been most disappointing. The Arab League has consistently played a significant role in trying to find a resolution to the conflict, including through the adoption of the Arab Peace Initiative. Unfortunately, the Security Council has yet to provide effective and meaningful support for the League's efforts. Instead, we have relied on the Middle East Quartet, whose efficacy is increasingly being questioned, especially because its composition excludes the League and regional representatives.

Exactly one year ago, in September 2011, the Middle East Quartet committed itself to the resumption of the direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine by September 2012. That deadline has come and gone, with no significant progress towards the resumption of talks.

As a result, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories continues to deteriorate sharply. The construction of illegal settlements, which violates international law and the resolutions of the Council, remains the major stumbling block to the viability of an independent Palestinian State and the resumption of the peace talks.

South Africa laments the failure of the Council to agree to the admission of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations, despite the overwhelming support of and endorsement by the League. We welcome the Arab League's decision to revive Palestine's bid for United Nations membership and call on the international community to provide support for a permanent and sustainable political solution, namely, the implementation of the two-State solution, which provides for the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with Israel, within internationally recognized borders based on those existing on 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Regrettably, years of failed diplomacy and oversight by the Security Council have resulted only in a hardening of positions by the occupier, increased abject poverty and suffering by the people of Palestine, and continued insecurity for the people of both Israel and Palestine. Perhaps it is time to consider a new approach. The League is well placed to take the lead and to ensure that Palestine's cause again becomes a priority of the Council.

With regard to the situation in Syria, we condemn the ongoing violence, which continues unabated. Meanwhile, the Security Council remains divided on this issue. South Africa emphasizes that the Security Council and the League of Arab States should address the Syrian crisis in a balanced manner, by applying pressure on all sides to stop the violence, and stop it immediately, to establish a ceasefire and comply fully with their respective obligations under the six-point plan and the Geneva action group communiqué.

Those assisting either party militarily are worsening the situation and prolonging the bloodshed. We call on those involved in such initiatives to refrain from them in assisting the efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table, in order to launch a credible Syrian-led and —owned political process that will lead to a legitimate transitional arrangement that is aimed at established a democratic, pluralistic society that meets the legitimate aspirations of all the Syrian people. The resolution of the conflict should also preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

In conclusion, the inability of the Council to deal with the situation in Palestine and in Syria underscores the need for Council reform. The absence of reform renders cooperation with regional organizations vitally important as the unreformed Council attempts to grapple with contemporary threats to international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I join other speakers in expressing my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting, which deals with a very important issue.

The Arab world is living through radical and painful transformations. Their impact is already being felt and will be felt for quite a long time, both in the region and globally. Of particular concern are the attempts to instigate inter-ethnic and interreligious discord on a global scale. It is necessary to stand in the way of those whose actions insult the feelings of believers and set people of different religions against one another. It is equally unacceptable to respond to provocations with acts of terror, which can have no justification, especially when diplomats and United Nations personnel are the targets thereof.

The process of change is caused by the aspirations of people to a better life and justice and to realize their political rights and freedoms. We share and understand those feelings. They are in line with the philosophy underlying Russian foreign policy, which is based on the assumption that all peoples should determine their own destiny independently.

The developments in the Middle East and North Africa confirm once again the need to respect the key principles of the Charter of the United Nations, above all the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their domestic affairs and the non-use or threat of force.

Speaking today at the Kremlin, President Vladimir Putin emphasized that the primacy of international law must be ensured in the international arena and within States. The path to a lasting solution to problems in that respect is through extensive dialogue and the achievement of national reconciliation.

Today the strife that has engulfed the Arab world is concentrated in the situation in Syria. We condemn all acts of violence and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, whoever the perpetrator may be — the Government of Syria or the armed opposition. However, a significant share of responsibility for the continuing bloodshed rests upon those States that are instigating Bashar Al-Assad's opponents to reject the ceasefire and dialogue and at the same time demanding the unconditional capitulation of the regime. Such an approach is unrealistic and, in fact, encourages the use of terrorist tactics, to which the armed opposition is resorting to more and more often. The refusal by some members of the Security Council to condemn those terrorist acts is of deep concern and calls into question the fundamental role of the Security Council in countering terrorism in all of its manifestations.

There can be no doubt that military methods, and especially outside military interference, pose serious threats to regional security, with unpredictable consequences. A sustainable settlement can be achieved only through negotiations and a quest for compromises that take into account the interests of all religious and ethnic groups of Syrian society.

There is a basis for achieving that goal: the communiqué of the action group, endorsed in Geneva on 30 June as follow-up to resolutions 2042 (2012) and 2043 (2012) and the Kofi Annan plan. That communiqué reflects a consensus among all Security Council permanent members, members of the League of Arab States, Turkey, the European Union and the United Nations Secretary-General. We strongly believe that the Geneva communiqué is still appropriate and relevant.

In that connection, I wish to call attention to the adoption today by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — the BRICS group — of a joint statement that objectively assesses the way out of the Syrian crisis and supports the Geneva communiqué as a basis for such actions. It is the basis for achieving consensus in the Security Council, the lack of which has been noted by some of our colleagues. The Geneva communiqué is objective and is the most realistic basis for such a consensus, in particular since all five permanent members signed it.

We hope that the Geneva consensus will also help Lakhdar Brahimi and his team to explore ways to overcome the crisis. We welcome any other constructive proposals on coordinating the international community's actions that could compel all Syrian parties to put an end to the violence and come to the negotiating table. In that context, we see some potential in the initiative of the President of Egypt, Mohamed Morsy.

Today as never before, many problems have accumulated on the political map of the Middle East. To date, no significant progress has been made in addressing them. There is no doubt that the political transformations that have been launched must be carried out to their logical end, taking into account the views of all groups of society in order to prevent the recurrence of turmoil. It is also clear that without modernization in the economic and the social spheres, it is hardly possible to make the Arab peoples feel that change is for the better and become immune to extremist attitudes.

One resource to explore in that regard is the responsible and targeted cooperation of the international community. It is essential that all outside players provide help to strengthen positive processes in the Arab world, including through mechanisms such as the Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition.

Interaction with members of the League of Arab States is among the strategic priorities of Russia's foreign policy. Our country has never had any colonial interests in the Middle East or North Africa and has never unleashed wars for resources in those areas or imposed its configuration of the political map of the region. From the beginning our presence there has been aimed at promoting communication among nations and the coexistence of the various cultures and religions — what is commonly now called the dialogue of civilizations.

Based on many years of friendship and partnership between Russia and countries of the Arab world, we are today promoting reasonable and mutually respectful dialogue on the whole range of regional issues and are negotiating new forms of interaction. The Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum has been established as a framework for implementing trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian projects. The Russian-Arab Business Council has also been launched.

We believe that the League of Arab States should play a concrete role in overcoming the challenges facing the Middle East and North Africa. It has in its arsenal a thorough knowledge of national psychology, traditions and historical experience and the capacity to formulate common goals for the region. The League's effectiveness will significantly increase as it builds its anti-crisis measures on the basis of giving priority to dialogue, mediation and peacekeeping, as provided for under the United Nations Charter. In general, we believe that it is essential to strengthen the overall coordination of the efforts of League and the United Nations.

We share a common position with members of the League of Arab States, namely, that despite the dramatic nature of the Arab Spring, such processes should not preclude the pursuit of ways to settle long-standing problems in the Middle East. First of all, that means achieving a just settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the existing international legal basis, which, as we know, includes the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted at the League of Arab States summit in Beirut in March 2002 and supported by the Security Council. Russia resolutely calls for intensified efforts by the Middle East Quartet mediators, in close cooperation with the League of Arab States, for an early resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli talks. We believe that it is a serious mistake that the Quartet was unable to hold a ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the general debate of the current General Assembly session.

The recent outbreak of tension in the region, the attacks against foreign embassies in a number of countries and the death of American diplomats in Libya have again affirmed the need for an uncompromising fight against terrorism. It is essential that terrorists who are attempting to benefit from the transformation process be unanimously banished by the international community everywhere, be they in Libya, Iraq, Yemen or Syria.

There should be no double standards. All States without exception should ensure the careful and respectful treatment of the historical, cultural and religious values of all peoples and should refrain from insulting the feelings of believers. The most important task is to prevent the proliferation of new threats from emerging in the shadow of today's transformation processes: radicalization of the public mood, instigation of inter-religious and intra-religious clashes, and growth in the uncontrolled traffic of drugs, weapons and militants.

A significant added value could be created by the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. That issue was raised by the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil Elaraby. Russia will continue to promote the earliest implementation of that important initiative and support the efforts of countries of the region and the League of Arab States, which should naturally play a leading role in convening a conference on the issue.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Harold Caballeros, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala.

Mr. Caballeros (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like thank your Government, Mr. President, for having convened this ministerial debate and to express my gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, for their respective interventions.

I am pleased to again participate in a Council debate, especially one that addresses such important a topic as the one you proposed. This topic, in essence, has two aspects. The first deals with peace and security in the Middle East, and the second falls more under developments in implementing Chapter VIII of the Charter — in this case, in the relationship between the Council and the League of Arab States.

Our delegation has spoken on many occasions in this Chamber on the first aspect. Consequently, our positions on various specific issues — such as the situation in Syria, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the situations in Lebanon and Yemen, as well as the so-called Arab Spring — are well known. We have also stated our concern over the inherent risks of nuclear development in some countries of the region, with the possibility of its eventual military use. The International Atomic Energy Agency has a crucial role to play in the elimination of that risk.

That having been said, despite the worrying developments of the past weeks, which have the potential to even further destabilize an inherently vulnerable situation, we generally welcome the direction of the changes under way in the Middle East, since they stem the grassroots of society and pursue universal goals that we can all share, such as freedom, justice, dignity and greater well-being for all.

My own region, Central America, and my own country, Guatemala, underwent important transitions in the 1980s and 1990s. The Guatemalan peace accords furthered a more democratic and tolerant society, respectful of human rights, with greater opportunities for all and governed by the rule of law. For more than 25 years, we have been struggling to meet those objectives. We have made very important achievements, but there are still some gaps and shortcomings. We know how difficult it is to foster change, but we will persist in that task with regard to our own country. Therefore we naturally desire the same for those nations in the Middle East that have launched processes towards more democratic, participative and inclusive systems of governance.

In Latin America, we have seen that freely elected Governments tend to resolve their differences, if they have them, with their neighbours peacefully and through negotiations. That is an important and encouraging lesson for our friends in the Middle East. Another lesson is that the intensity of potential conflicts diminishes when economies offer greater opportunities of well-being to their populations. Therefore, we believe that democracy, development, justice and peace go hand in hand.

One additional lesson is relevant to our discussion today and it relates to the second area to which I referred. We value the role played by regional and subregional organizations. In our part of the world, we have over 60 years of experience in benefitting from the institutions of Central American integration to forge a regional economic area and lay the basis for political union. That is why we have supported the increasingly broad alliances that the Security Council has built with regional and subregional entities, both in Africa and in the Middle East. We applaud the presence in this meeting of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, whose partnership role in addressing the challenges of the Middle East is increasingly significant. We hope that role will deepen and broaden in the future, without in any way diminishing the exclusive purview of the Council. In cementing that partnership, the Council can count on the support of Guatemala.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Yang Jiechi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Yang Jiechi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am glad to attend this high-level meeting of the Security Council on peace and security in the Middle East. It is good to see Mr. Guido Westerwelle chair the meeting.

The Middle East is undergoing unprecedented changes. The political, economic and social impact of the international financial crisis on that region is unfolding. The people of that region have shown a strong desire to run their affairs independently and to seek change. Some countries are in a state of turmoil, while others have entered a critical stage of political transition and transformation. Regional hot-spot issues have become more severe, local conflicts have increased, and extremist and terrorist forces have intensified their infiltration efforts. Traditional and non-traditional security issues are entwined, exerting a greater impact on the region.

In short, the situation in the Middle East has become more complex and fragile and has attracted the broad attention of the international community. Peace, stability and development in the Middle East represent the shared aspiration of all people in the region and serve the common interests of the entire international community. Middle East affairs should be addressed mainly by the people of the region, and the future and destiny of the region should be in the hands of its own people.

The international community should respect the aspirations and calls of the people of the region for change and development. It should respect the distinctive religious and cultural characteristics of the region, heed the voices of the countries and peoples of the region on issues related to the Middle East, and urge the parties concerned to work out appropriate solutions through inclusive political processes and to strike the proper balance between reform, stability and development in order to achieve durable peace and common prosperity.

The Palestinian issue remains at the core of the situation in the Middle East. With drastic changes in the regional landscape, it is all the more imperative for the international community to recognize the importance and urgency of relaunching peace talks between Palestine and Israel. The international community should adopt a more active and constructive stance to promote peace talks, and urge the Palestinians and Israelis alike to take concrete steps to remove obstacles to peace talks, rebuild mutual trust, resume negotiations and make substantive progress at an early date.

Israel should assume responsibility for taking the first step. China supports the Palestinian people in establishing, based on the 1967 borders, an independent Palestinian State that enjoys full sovereignty, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We support Palestine's membership of the United Nations and other international organizations.

The Syrian issue concerns not only the future and destiny of Syria and its people, but also overall peace and stability in the Middle East. The crisis in Syria remains unresolved, and the situation is worrying. In the face of the complex and grave situation, the international community must have even stronger faith in peace and stay on the right track of seeking a political solution. We should support Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, in conducting impartial mediation, and urge all parties in Syria to earnestly implement relevant Security Council resolutions. Mr. Kofi Annan's six-point plan and the communiqué of the foreign ministers' meeting of the Action Group for Syria (S/2012/522). We should also urge the parties to put an immediate end to the fighting and violence, protect civilians and create conditions for a Syrian-led political transition.

As a permanent member of the Council, China has faithfully fulfilled its obligations and acted as a positive force in seeking a political solution to the issue. China is ready to join the rest of the international community in an unremitting effort to resolve the Syrian issue in a just, peaceful and appropriate way.

The Iranian nuclear issue has a significant bearing on the evolution of the situation in the Middle East. China opposes the development and possession of nuclear weapons by any country in the Middle East. At the same time, we believe that the international community should respect the right of a country to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. China maintains that dialogue and cooperation are the only way to address the Iranian nuclear issue, and that it is ill-advised to resort to force or unilateral sanctions. The parties concerned should have firm confidence in and remain committed to a diplomatic solution. At the same time, they should be flexible and pragmatic, seek common ground while overcoming differences, work for early progress through dialogue and negotiations, and over time, achieve a comprehensive, long-term and appropriate solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.

Peace, stability and development in the Middle East will not be possible without the support and assistance of regional and international organizations. The United Nations Charter entrusts the Security Council with the primary responsibility for international peace and security. At the same time, in Chapter VIII of the Charter the Organization's founders also encouraged the peaceful settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements. The League of Arab States is an important multilateral organization in the Middle East. Over the years it has played an active role in upholding the lawful rights and interests of the Arab peoples, enhancing solidarity among Arab States and promoting peace and stability in the region and beyond.

In the current circumstances, it is of both practical significance and far-reaching strategic importance for the United Nations and the League of Arab States to strengthen their communication and cooperation and jointly safeguard peace, stability and development in the Middle East. Closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League should be based on the purposes and principles of the Charter. The principles enshrined in the Charter, including sovereign equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, are the basic norms governing international relations and important guidelines for addressing hot-spot issues.

In carrying out cooperation, the United Nations and the Arab League should aim to uphold those principles, safeguard the fundamental and long-term interests of the peoples of all countries in the Middle East, and maintain peace and stability in the region. Closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League should focus on the peaceful settlement of disputes. History has shown time and again that settling disputes through such diplomatic means as dialogue and negotiation is the only right and effective way to achieve durable peace.

As a regional organization, the Arab League has a unique and important role to play in encouraging the countries of the region to settle disputes through mediation, negotiation, good offices and other peaceful means. The United Nations should encourage the Arab League to stay the course of political settlement, build consensus and coordinate the efforts of countries of the region in order to improve the situation and achieve peace and stability.

Closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League should follow a holistic approach. That is of crucial importance. The causes of turbulence and conflict in the Middle East are mostly related to economic well-being and ethnic and religious factors. The United Nations and the Arab League should pay greater attention and give more support to economic and social development in the region, help the region achieve development to improve people's lives, and encourage different ethnic groups and religions to show mutual tolerance, achieve reconciliation and live in harmony, so as to remove the economic and social breeding grounds for turbulence and extremist thinking.

China is a good friend to and partner of the Arab countries and people. We firmly support and help to promote their just cause. With respect to the issues of peace and security in the Middle East, China has always fulfilled its obligations in a constructive way. We stand for peace and oppose war; we stand for equality and oppose power politics; we stand for principles and oppose interference; and we stand for dialogue and oppose confrontation.

Bearing in mind the fundamental long-term interests of the peoples of the Middle East, China has made its own efforts to advance peace, stability and development in the region. China will, as always, take a constructive part in the mediation and settlement of hot-spot issues in the Middle East, support the United Nations and the Security Council in continuing to play an important role in addressing Middle East issues, and help put the region on a path of peace, stability, economic prosperity and social progress at an early date.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mammadyarov (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to join others in congratulating Germany on its successful presidency of the Security Council this month and to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely meeting on an important topic. We are also grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, for their briefings.

Today's meeting is taking place at an important time in the sense that the Middle East region is experiencing historic changes that testify to the desire and determination of its societies to shape their destiny. The transformation process has yielded encouraging trends towards ensuring respect for human rights and guaranteeing economic and social well-being for everyone. At the same time, there is an obvious need for an in-depth analysis of the root causes and ultimate implications of this complex process for the regional and global security architecture. While the international response to developments in the Middle East has varied in its essence and intensity, the primary role in maintaining adequate international engagement belongs to international and regional organizations, particularly to the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

It should be noted that not all regional organizations can boast of their ability and political will to understand the root causes of security problems and to contribute effectively to their resolution. The League of Arab States has proved to be one of those regional organizations that are able to take the lead in promoting peace, security and stability in the region. In that regard, we are pleased to see that cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is motivated by the common objective of enhancing peace and security and helping the States of the region through this difficult period of their history. Their combined engagement and presence have been instrumental in carrying out important tasks in such areas as conflict prevention and resolution, crisis response and management, and the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

Against the background of regional fragilities, which go hand in hand with the challenges of the transformations experienced in the region, maintaining the high profile and ongoing active involvement of the United Nations and the League of Arab States has acquired increased importance. Therefore, mutually reinforcing cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States has become ever more essential for maintaining peace and security in the region and working out sound strategies to assist the States in transition.

The role of the League of Arab States as an insider in the region is particularly valuable in connecting regional specificities with the global dimension by interacting with the United Nations, its specialized agencies and field presences. The United Nations and the League of Arab States should further galvanize their efforts to achieve the best results for the States and peoples of the region.

In that regard, we commend the appointment of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria as an important step forward in the cooperation between the two organizations, and we reiterate our full support for his activities.

The international community must continue to be consistent in its efforts to facilitate solutions to regional crises and conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, as required by the United Nations Charter. Azerbaijan strongly supports that approach in working to resolve protracted conflicts in different parts of the world.

While recognizing the historic opportunities that recent waves of transition have opened up for the Middle East, we should not neglect the long-standing security problems. Solving them is a prerequisite for maintaining peace, stability and sustainable development in the region. All stakeholders in the Middle East should regard the latest developments as a unique chance and an urgent call to take courageous steps towards achieving tangible results in the Middle East peace process. A comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is long overdue in that conflict, which undermines the security, stability and well-being of the entire region and has an impact stretching well beyond regional boundaries. We consider it essential for the Security Council and the League of Arab States to cooperate on this issue of paramount importance to all of us.

Once again, we cannot but express our deep concern over the recent escalation provoked by blasphemy against Islam. We strongly condemn all assaults against religions. At the same time, attacks on civilians, in particular diplomatic personnel, cannot be justified in any circumstances.

We would truly like to believe that, irrespective of all the challenges and difficulties, the pursuit of peace and progress in the Middle East will never be abandoned, and that the endeavours of its peoples to build stable, secure and democratic States will continue to be bolstered by the international community. In this context, we are confident that continued engagement by the United Nations and the League of Arab States, together with strengthened cooperation between them, consistent with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, will effectively contribute to peace and security in the region. As a member of the Security Council and an observer to the League of Arab States, Azerbaijan will continue its utmost efforts to that end.

In conclusion, I would like to express our full support for today's draft presidential statement, aimed at helping to develop effective cooperation between the two organizations.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. William Hague, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Hague (United Kingdom): I, too, thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States for their words, and I am grateful to you, Mr. President, for proposing this debate on peace and security in the Middle East.

Over the past 18 months, the Arab Spring, as we have come to call it, has taken a different path in each country of the region. In some countries revolutions have been relatively swift. In Syria, as we know, horrifying violence continues to engulf the country almost a year and a half since protests began. In other countries, peaceful reform is under way. We respect the right of each country in the region to find its own path to reform, based on its unique cultures and traditions, but we will always stand up for our belief in the universality of human rights and freedom that is at the heart of democracy.

Indeed, that historic change has been driven by the people of the region demanding the greater political and economic freedom that is their legitimate right. History has shown that those Governments that draw their legitimacy from the consent of their people are best placed to deliver lasting peace and security. Where the social contract between citizen and State is based on trust and accountability, societies are able to flower; where it is based on fear, violence and the denial of rights, conflict and insecurity arise. That is why the Arab Spring is a moment of huge opportunity to build peace, security and prosperity for the region and, by extension, the world.

Alongside open inclusive, national structures, lasting peace and security also rely upon effective international and regional institutions. That is a lesson we ourselves have learned the hard way, reflected in the very history of how this body was created. And over the past 18 months, the League of Arab States has showed resolve and perseverance in working to achieve regional security and stability. I warmly commend the clear leadership it has demonstrated. It was decisive in calling for a no-fly zone in Libya. It has taken the lead in responding to the Syrian crisis, including efforts to mediate between the Syrian opposition and regime, as well as to apply political, economic and diplomatic pressure on the regime to end the violence.

The decision to appoint a Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria is a clear indication of the growing positive cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League. We strongly support the work of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi and we do our utmost to support his efforts to resolve the crisis in Syria, just as we supported his predecessor, Mr. Kofi Annan. I fully support efforts to strengthen further the relationship between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, and welcome the deepening of cooperation between those two bodies. That is important as there are urgent challenges at hand for which the United Nations and the League of Arab States bare a shared responsibility.

As the Syrian crisis continues to deepen, the risk of broader regional instability and conflict increases. Addressing such crises is exactly what the Security Council exists to do. That the Security Council has failed to act on its clear responsibilities in the case of Syria is inexcusable and shocking, as Mr. Fabius said earlier. It is a terrible indictment of the Council that over 22,000 people have died since it first failed to agree on a resolution to stem the violence. It is long past the time for the Council to use its collective weight to require the Syrian regime to end the violence and to impose serious consequences if it does not.

With regard to the Middle East peace process, I am also deeply concerned by developments on the ground, including continued settlement activity. I call on both sides to avoid steps that undermine the prospects of peace and to resume direct talks. We have long been clear that a Palestinian State is a legitimate goal, and the best way of achieving that is through a comprehensive agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. We want to see a solution to this conflict that gives the Palestinian people the State they need and deserve and the Israeli people long-term security and peace. Without that, lasting peace and security in the region will remain elusive.

It is remarkable how much has been achieved in the Middle East and North Africa since the Arab Spring began. In Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, citizens have voted in free elections for the first time in decades. Change has been led by the people of the region, and it is not for anyone else to impose their vision on the region. However, there is a crucial role for the international community to play in supporting peaceful reform. The United Kingdom is doing this through our Arab partnership by providing diplomatic and practical support to strengthen the political and economic participation of citizens in the Middle East and North Africa. We must act together to ensure that hard-won freedoms and rights are protected and that those still fighting for their legitimate rights receive our support, laying the foundations for lasting peace and security in the region. We must continue to work to ensure that the United Nations acts as a bridge for effective international cooperation to provide that support to the region. The people of the region deserve that promise and we must not fail them.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia.

Ms. Holguín Cuéllar (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join other members in congratulating Germany on assuming the presidency of the Council and you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the League or Arab States for their presentations.

The work of regional organizations in the search for solutions to situations on the agenda of the Security Council is of the greatest importance. We are all aware of the work of the League of Arab States in the case of Lybia and the Gulf Cooperation Council in the case of Yemen. Regional organizations are, without a doubt, those with the greatest knowledge of the situations in their regions.

The Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa face great security challenges. Cooperation with regional organizations — such as the Arab League, the Economic Community of Western African States, the African Union and others — are of the utmost importance in achieving lasting solutions that also address the concerns of each region. The Council should promote close collaboration with regional organizations, giving priority to strategies aimed at conflict prevention, mediation and good offices. Regional organizations have a privileged position, unique access to key stakeholders, and exceptional knowledge of and experience with the diverse situations in their regions; hence the importance of their participation as strategic partners in carrying out actions that fit the particularities and needs of each situation under consideration. Nevertheless, it is important to guarantee that the work of the Security Council and regional organizations harmonize with one another.

The concept paper before us (S/2012/686, annex) asks how cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in particular can be strengthened. In that regard, I believe that the holding of annual evaluation meetings, such as those that currently take place with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, including dialogue on conflict prevention, could be beneficial.

Cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States can and must be strengthened in order to confront the security challenges in the Middle East. The appointment of Mr. Kofi Annan as Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria a few months ago, and more recently, of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as Joint Special Representative are good examples of that cooperation.

I would like once again to condemn the attack in Libya on the American consulate in Benghazi, which resulted in the death of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and other officials. We cannot allow extremism and terrorism to demean human life. Tolerance and respect for cultural, religious, political and economic diversity must take priority in global relations.

I would like to refer to the situation in Syria. The Syrian crisis is a threat to peace in the Middle East, a region that has faced precarious security conditions for more than a year. We therefore deplore the inability of the Council to stop the violence and bloodshed and to facilitate a peaceful solution. In that regard, we must point out that the Council has not been able to reach an agreement to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to it by Member States.

The humanitarian situation is alarming, as we discussed a few weeks ago in this very Chamber. We share the concerns about the flow of refugees into neighbouring countries, and today we wish to acknowledge in particular the efforts of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, which have taken in hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in recent months. The Syrian people have also suffered from internal displacement and destruction of their homes and infrastructure. We must redouble our efforts to find a negotiated political solution to that crisis, which is becoming more and more urgent by the day.

I take this opportunity to reiterate our call on all parties in Syria to immediately put an end to force and violence. We reiterate our concern with regard to the persistent deterioration of the human rights situation. I call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law. While the primary responsibility to guarantee respect for and the protection of individual rights and fundamental freedoms of the population, including the right to life and the freedoms of expression and association, lies with the Syrian authorities, all parties involved are obliged to comply with the norms of international humanitarian law.

Despite the turmoil currently affecting region, the search for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must remain a priority of the efforts of the international community to achieve peace throughout the region. In this case, as in others, we must take advantage of the comparative advantage of the League of Arab States to overcome existing obstacles and restart negotiations aimed at establishing a Palestinian State living in peace with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders and based on an agreement that will ensure the peaceful coexistence of the two nations. To achieve that goal, favourable conditions in the areas of human rights and international humanitarian law are necessary to foster renewed confidence and advance the negotiations. Colombia continues to support dialogue as a path to peace and prosperity, and will continue to urgently promote that point of view in the Council.

We support the draft presidential statement on effective cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Elliot Ohin, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Togo.

Mr. Ohin (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to commend the German presidency of the Security Council for organizing this high-level debate on the Middle East in the context of cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in maintaining international peace and security. I also thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States for their respective briefings on the situation in the Middle East. Finally, I welcome the presence of my fellow Ministers for Foreign Affairs, which bears witness to the importance of the issue before the Council.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States dates back to 1950 and is highly important, particularly now that the international community is facing all types of threats, including armed conflict, terrorism, humanitarian crises, crises linked to extremism, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The importance of the contributions of regional organizations to the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated by the Charter of the United Nations, no longer requires proof. At a time when serious conflicts and threats in the Middle East call for all available resources, it is more important today than ever to strengthen cooperation under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. That is not a choice, but a necessity that brings to mind a statement made by the former Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Chedli Klibi, during a meeting between the two organizations held in Tunis in 1983.

> "The League would very much like to consolidate and develop existing ties in all areas related to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to cooperate by every means possible in the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations".

The advantage of the League of Arab States in its ability to bring States together to address issues that fall within the remit of the Security Council shows that its cooperation with the United Nations is essential and should be strengthened. That cooperation has taken many forms, notably during the Syrian crisis, in which the Arab League's initiatives have been supported by the United Nations as a whole and the Security Council in particular. The appointments of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria in February, and of the Joint Special Representative in August, following the resignation of the Joint Special Envoy, are examples of the readiness and commitment of the Secretaries-General of the two organizations to work together to seek a solution to the crisis.

The League of Arab States and the United Nations should continue to explore the ways and means necessary to help the Syrian people to end the tragedy that has already caused some 30,000 deaths and generated hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and refugees. Moreover, that cooperation should extend beyond the Syrian crisis to other situations and conflicts in the region, where the League of Arab States has not been very visible. The increased involvement of the League in the settlement of all crises in the Middle East crises is desirable, not only because it is recommended by the Charter of the United Nations, but also because the League can suggest possible solutions that take into account the cultural, historical and sociological ties among parties to the conflicts.

While cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States has not yet achieved a solution to the Syrian crisis, it remains a framework for working together and seeking solutions in which the courage and resolve of its actors could prove beneficial. My country believes that the two organizations should further pool their efforts towards a settlement to that crisis and other conflict situations in the Middle East, such as in Yemen and Lebanon, and the nagging question of Palestine.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, my delegation would like once again to welcome the Arab Peace Initiative for a settlement of the conflict. The implementation of that plan could calm tensions in the region. In that context, we urge all the parties concerned to work with a view to its harmonious implementation.

Cooperation between the League and the United Nations should be strengthened to ensure the necessary coherence among the initiatives and actions of the two organizations. That will undoubtedly require an updating of knowledge in all areas, particularly an enhanced climate of trust among the parties, as no today country or organization is fully capable of assisting a country or region to overcome a crisis. That objective formed the basis of resolution 2033 (2012) on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. We welcome the meeting held by the two organizations in July in Vienna, at which they agreed to strengthen their partnership in all areas, in particular with respect to the situation in the Middle East.

Likewise, we welcome direct contact, on the one hand, between the Secretaries General of the two organizations, and on the other hand, among the specialized institutions of the League of Arab States and the bodies of the United Nations system. These initiatives reflect the need for the League of Arab States and the United Nations to develop a promising partnership that will provide solutions to the challenges and transformations under way in the Middle East. Such cooperation could be developed by strengthening the mechanisms that could emerge from regular meetings, during which the two organizations could evaluate their partnership and agree on joint actions to prevent conflict or to seek appropriate ways and means to achieve lasting solutions to ongoing crises.

Along those lines, my country believes that the establishment of a United Nations liaison office at the League of Arab States, such as that at the African Union, would be desirable because it could certainly help to bolster exchanges of information and facilitate bilateral meetings. Consultations among the secretariats of the League of Arab States and the United Nations should, above all, include the Security Council with a view to deeper exchanges on all questions related to the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in the Middle East.

Togo ardently hopes that this meeting will outline ways to strengthen cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States with a view to ensuring effective action to resolve conflicts in the region. My country hopes to see the League of Arab States become an organization working for peace in close collaboration with the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ranjan Mathai, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India.

Mr. Mathai (India): Let me begin by joining others in congratulating you, Mr. President, on presiding over this high-level meeting on peace and security in West Asia and North Africa. I also want to thank the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States for their valuable statements.

Developments in West Asia and North Africa have played a major role in shaping the history of the world since ancient times. The region has been the birthplace of major religions and great civilizations. By virtue of the genius of its peoples, its strategic location and its natural resources, the region has been a focus of considerable interest internationally. It is therefore not surprising that the momentous transformation that has taken place in several countries of the region since late 2010 has been of great interest to the world at large.

The general aspiration has been that those transformations should be peaceful and should lead to inclusive and democratic outcomes within their countries. The League of Arab States, as the most important regional organization, predating the United Nations, has played a significant role in the unfolding of events in the region and has guided the involvement of the international community in them. Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter recognizes the importance of regional organizations and their role in matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter also provides a broad framework for the Security Council's cooperation with such regional organizations, while clearly stating that it is the Council itself that has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Cooperation between the Arab League and the United Nations began in the early 1950s. Both organizations have benefited from the convergence of their desire to maintain international peace and security, despite occasional differences. Enhanced partnerships between United Nations agencies and the Arab League at the institutional level in the fields of human development, capacity building and the empowerment of women and young people have been of great benefit to the region. That existing cooperation should now be further strengthened to help the countries of the region meet their peoples' aspirations to play a greater role in shaping their destiny. India stands ready to play its part in that regard.

It is important to underline that the Council's cooperation with regional organizations, particularly the League of Arab States, should also avoid selectivity. Cooperation with one regional organization should not come at the expense of another. The goal of peaceful resolution of conflicts should determine the Council's actions. The international community should guide all United Nations activities, including its cooperation with regional organizations. Both the United Nations and the League should use all the tools of diplomacy to help the countries concerned in their transition to an inclusive and participatory polity while maintaining social stability and cohesion. Their cooperation should encompass all the issues relevant to international peace and security, particularly the fight against terrorism. The principles of national sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity must be respected. It is also important that the peculiarities of each situation be kept in mind.

If there is one issue that requires the immediate attention of both the United Nations and the League of Arab States, it is the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Israeli-Palestinian issue. That issue cannot be ignored while we focus on recent developments in the region. There can be no durable peace in West Asia without a just and comprehensive settlement, based on the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to a State of their own with internationally recognized borders, living side by side and in peace and security with Israel. We therefore urge both the Council and the Arab League to facilitate the resumption of the Middle East peace process as quickly as possible.

The League of Arab States has been playing an important role in resolving the Syrian crisis. We fully support a peaceful settlement of the conflict through a Syrian-led, inclusive political process, based on a firm rejection of any military intervention. We urge all sides, Syrian and foreign, to cooperate in good faith with the Joint Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, so that the Syrian crisis can be resolved without any further bloodshed.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jalil Abbas Jilani, Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr. Jilani (Pakistan): At the outset, I would like to thank Germany for convening today's debate on an issue that is close to our hearts and a very important and long-standing item on the Security Council's agenda. I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and welcome the ministers attending today's debate. We also welcome the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, to the Security Council for the third time in a few months, a sign of the increasing coordination between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

Pakistan's ties with the Arab world have a deep and continuing historical, cultural and religious underpinning. We regard the peace and progress of the Arab world as synonymous with our own. Pakistan supports cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in various areas, including the maintenance of peace and security, humanitarian assistance, development and human rights. Pakistan believes that regional organizations can play an important role in the pacific settlement of disputes. They are better placed to understand the realities and complexities of situations on the ground, and thus bring a complementary role and perspective to the United Nations.

The spirit of multilateralism lies in building bridges, finding common ground and pooling resources. The appointment of a Joint Special Envoy, and subsequently a Joint Special Representative, for Syria is an example of synergy flowing from multilateralism.

The Arab world is going through a period of uncertainty as well as reform. As a country born of a democratic struggle, and as a functioning and vibrant democracy, Pakistan fully supports the fulfilment of a people's legitimate aspirations. However, the decision for change must be channelled through peaceful means, and should be led and owned by the people themselves. Pakistan has always been opposed on principle to any outside interference, use of force or violence. Similarly, we feel that coercive measures lead to a hardening of positions and are seldom effective. Dialogue and engagement are the essence of multilateralism, and that should be maintained.

It is important to reiterate that the era of rejuvenation, often euphemistically termed the Arab Spring, should not bypass the people of Palestine. They have suffered under the yoke of tyrannical oppression and unlawful occupation for too long. The gentle winds of spring must visit the Palestinian territory and other occupied lands as well. The Security Council must not remain silent in the face of Israel's continued defiance of the collective will of the international community, its illegal settlement policy and its collective punishment of the Palestinians with the continued blockade of Gaza, which has now entered its sixth year.

We call on the League of Arab States to continue to play its crucial and unquestioned role in bringing those historical injustices to the world's attention and working towards a just settlement. The Security Council must fully support those efforts. We firmly believe that without a resolution of the core issue in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Arab Peace Initiative, aimed at the re-establishment of an independent and viable State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, a comprehensive peace plan would not be possible.

The United Nations and the League of Arab States have been building institutional ties over the past few years. The presence here today of Secretary General Nabil Elaraby is proof of that. Apart from the area of peace and security, there has also been cooperation in other fields, ranging from counter-terrorism to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian issues. We hope that the United Nations and the League will build further on those linkages. Increased cooperation and coordination between them is in the interest of both organizations. We hope that such synergies will lead to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region, especially over the attainment of the inalienable right to self-determination by the people of Palestine.

Pakistan strongly condemns the recent release of a defamatory video and the publication of derogatory caricatures in the newspapers. We endorse the Secretary-General's pronouncement that those are senseless and disgraceful acts.

They are indeed abhorrent examples of incitement to hatred and discrimination against Muslims under the pretext of freedom of expression and opinion. As we have witnessed, the global reaction to, and consequences of, those acts have a strong bearing on international peace and security. The international community must therefore take stock of those reprehensible acts and take concerted actions to introduce and implement adequate measures, including legislation, against such acts at all levels, in accordance with international human rights standards. There is an obvious need to strengthen dialogue and cooperation among all religions, cultures and civilizations for promoting harmony and coexistence.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this high-level meeting on such an important issue. I also wish to thank you personally for presiding over it. I also thank both Mr. Ban Ki moon and Mr. Nabil Elaraby for their very valuable contributions to today's discussion.

These are indeed challenging times in the Middle East, where strong emotions and deep-seated grievances have again come to the fore, with tragic consequences. We were deeply saddened by the deaths of Ambassador Stevens and his colleagues in Benghazi, and we again wish to extend our sincere condolences to their families and the American people. There is simply no justification for such acts of violence or attacks against diplomatic missions. They must be unequivocally denounced and condemned. They are also attacks against all of us and the values enshrined in the Charter.

Now is a moment for restraint and sober reflection by all. Certainly, people in North Africa did not fight so bravely for their basic rights simply to have their dreams and legitimate aspirations hijacked by a few. Also, the distortion of religion to fuel hatred and to advance narrow extremist agendas must be vehemently condemned. It is imperative that we all work collectively to counter such destructive forces. As President Obama said yesterday, "violence and intolerance has no place among our United Nations" (see A/67/PV.6). Diversity is something that deserves to be celebrated, not feared.

The challenges of today's world demand common responses. In that sense, we believe that the Security Council could and should enhance its role and effectiveness as the primary body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security by developing strong complementary partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, as was the case in Libya, Syria and Yemen.

There are ample opportunities to increase the cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States, be it in the realms of preventive diplomacy, mediation, rapid response, conflict resolution or in the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter.

The United Nations and the League of Arab States must also build upon shared accomplishments. Such is the case in Libya, where, together with the African Union and the European Union, they can play a decisive role in supporting Libyans on their path to democracy, reconciliation, peace and prosperity. Such is also the case in Yemen. As the Secretary-General said, cooperation between the two organizations should not limit itself to political issues or the crisis of the day, but move to other areas, be they economic, social or humanitarian in nature.

The Middle East faces renewed risks as the bloody conflict in Syria rages on and the Middle East peace process remains in protracted stalemate. Both of those conflicts constitute serious threats to international peace and security and must be urgently resolved. Both the Security Council and the League of Arab States have specific responsibilities in this context that they cannot shy away from. There is a pressing imperative for them to renew efforts and work together with a view to reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting peace throughout the region.

In Syria the death toll continues to mount. The tragic humanitarian situation is worsening day by day, and widespread and systematic gross violations of human rights proceed unabated. We appeal to all parties in the conflict to abide strictly by the principles of international humanitarian law and to respect human rights. This terrible human tragedy could have been averted had the Syrian Government not responded to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people with brutal force and shunned all attempts to promote a peaceful political solution.

Further militarization of the conflict will only entail further human suffering, threaten the integrity of Syria itself and destabilize neighbouring countries. There is no alternative to a political solution that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, allowing for a peaceful and democratic transition.

The appointment of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, just as the previous appointment of Mr. Kofi Annan, underlines the cooperation between our two organizations. Mr. Brahimi can count on our full support. However, his chances of success will depend greatly upon the support he receives from the Security Council and the League of Arab States, as Mr. Elaraby rightly underlined.

Together, we must persuade the parties and stakeholders to view his appointment as an opportunity for them to rethink their options, end the violence and engage seriously in an inclusive Syrian-led political transition. To that end, the Council has to exert united, sustained and effective pressure on all sides, and on the Syrian authorities in particular in the light of their primary responsibilities.

Developments in the Arab world render a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict ever more urgent. That, however, will remain elusive as long as the Palestinian question, which is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, remains unresolved.

In September 2011, President Abbas submitted the Palestinian application for membership to the United Nations, and the Quartet set a framework for the resumption of direct negotiations and a time frame for their conclusion. A year on, the parties have not yet engaged in a meaningful discussion on the core issues. As a result, the prospect of a free and sovereign Palestinian State is quickly withering away. Evidently, the instruments and tools we have relied on thus far have not succeeded and need to be reviewed, replaced or adapted.

Israel's intensified settlement activities, which are illegal, are eroding the very viability of the two-State solution, as Minister Fabius rightly underlined, undermining confidence and weakening moderate voices. At the same time, settler violence has proceeded unabated and vandalism against places of worship has increased. We appeal to Israel once again to cease settlement expansion and to act decisively against the perpetrators of those acts of violence.

The Security Council and the League of Arab States must renew efforts with a view to the swift resumption of meaningful direct talks based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the internationally endorsed parameters and the Arab Peace Initiative. In order to succeed, direct negotiations must also establish a clear and credible political time frame.

In the most immediate term, we must ensure that the Palestinian State-building achievements are not reversed due to the fiscal and economic predicaments that the Palestinian Authority is currently facing. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the problem remains a political one, namely, the continued occupation that curtails the development of a sustainable Palestinian economy, thus forcing Palestinians to be donor-dependent.

We fully understand Israel's legitimate security concerns, as we understand that an independent Palestine is not only an inalienable right but also a question of fundamental justice for the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, there are many issues where closer cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States can, and should, be further deepened. That would undoubtedly be in the interest of international peace and security, as well as of the stability and prosperity of a wide and still unstable region.

The President: Following consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

> "The Security Council reaffirms its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.
>
> "The Security Council reiterates that cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security and consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter can improve collective security.
>
> "The Security Council recalls all its previous resolutions and statements of its President which underscore the importance of developing effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations in accordance with the

Charter and the relevant statutes of regional and subregional organizations.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the briefings of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Nabil Elaraby.

"The Security Council recognizes and further encourages efforts by the League of Arab States to contribute to collective endeavours to settle conflicts in the Middle East peacefully as well as to promoting international responses to the transformations experienced in the region, while reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of regional countries and to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

"The Security Council welcomes the intensifying cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the wake of these transformations which reflect the legitimate aspirations of all peoples in the region for freedom, political participation and economic and social well-being in a pluralistic society.

"The Security Council reiterates its commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to seek a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and reaffirms the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative. The Security Council also recalls its previous relevant resolutions.

"The Security Council, recalling its resolutions 2042 (2012) and 2043 (2012), welcomes the appointment of the Joint Special Representative for Syria of the United Nations and the League of Arab States as an important step forward in the cooperation between both organizations and expresses its support for his efforts in continuing the Secretary-General's good offices in that regard.

"The Security Council commends the members of the League of Arab States for their ongoing commitment to international peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including through the contribution of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

"The Security Council takes note of the general meeting on cooperation between the secretariats of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and their specialized organizations, held in Vienna from 10 to 12 July 2012.

"The Security Council acknowledges the intention expressed by representatives of both organizations to cooperate across a broad agenda of mutual concern, formulating adequate joint responses, where appropriate, to humanitarian crises, promoting human rights, freedom of expression, food security, environment protection, and the fight against terrorism and the illicit trafficking of drugs and arms, while reiterating the need to ensure that all United Nations efforts to restore peace and security also respect and promote the rule of law.

"The Security Council recalls its press statements of 12 and 14 September regarding recent attacks on diplomatic personnel and premises and reaffirms that such acts are unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed. The Security Council stresses the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world. The Security Council underlines the common commitment of both the United Nations and the League of Arab States to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of tolerance and peace, and calls for enhanced cooperation in light of recent events to promote better understanding across countries, cultures and civilizations.

"The Security Council recognizes the importance of strengthening cooperation on capacity building with the League of Arab States in the maintenance of international peace and security.

"The Security Council expresses its determination to take effective steps to further enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to report, as appropriate, on further ways of strengthening institutional relations and cooperation between the two organizations."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/20.

I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco to make a further statement.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for delivering that important statement at the enf of our debate. I also thank you for your patience and perseverance in pursuit of ensuring the text's adoption.

The presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/20) constitutes a plus for the United Nations and for the League of Arab States. Given the unprecedented efforts that have characterized the actions of the League of Arab States over the past few months, this statement is certainly well-deserved. But it is also something that the United Nations wanted. It serves as a further milestone in strengthening relations between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. We would like to express our great satisfaction at the fact that the statement's last paragraph leaves the door open to even greater cooperation and strengthening of institutional relations.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Elaraby.

Mr. Elaraby: I would like to thank you very much for Germany's excellent initiative in calling for this meeting.

At this meeting we heard very important statements by the 15 members of the Security Council. I hope that members will consider basic matters, and not just the general statements that we can hear everywhere. It is important that we try to reach the core of the problems and to see how we can resolve them.

With regard to the Syrian Arab Republic, as many said today, the question is how to build upon what was agreed upon in Geneva on 30 June. At the start of the transitional period, the Security Council has to act and to act according to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. That has to be done. The five permanent members of the Council have agreed upon a text; let them build upon it.

With regard to Palestine, I would say only that managing the conflict is no longer a solution; one has to end the conflict. The Security Council gave up its responsibility with regard to Palestine to something called the Quartet. I did not mention it, but today many speakers pointed out that we said last year that something would happen this September. The month is about to end and nothing has happened. It is time that the Security Council takes the matter into its own hands, debate it and see what can be done.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6842

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6842nd meeting

Wednesday, 3 October 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Caballeros/Mr. Briz Gutiérrez/Mr. Rosenthal	(Guatemala)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Sun Xiaobo
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Andrabi
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/678)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-52809 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first Council meeting for the month of October 2012, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Peter Wittig, Permanent Representative of Germany, for his work as President of the Council during September. I am sure that I speak for all Council members in expressing my thanks to Ambassador Wittig and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the affairs of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/678)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Spain and Uruguay to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/678, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fernández Amunátegui.

Mr. Fernández Amunátegui (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to convey my sincere thanks to you, Sir, and the other members of the Security Council for having organized this meeting, the purpose of which is to present to the Council the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/678). I also take this opportunity to welcome the presence of the Haitian Ambassador.

I would like to begin with a special thanks to all those countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and all the Member States that have collaborated in the process of stabilization and reconstruction and provided valuable support to peacebuilding in Haiti.

On 8 March, when I had the opportunity to review the political situation in Haiti, I noted that MINUSTAH had insisted on a governance pact, which is improving the situation and facilitating consensus for Haiti's development. While progress has been slow, we can confirm that clear steps forward have been taken in the political stabilization process and progress has been made with regard to rule of law institutions.

On 19 June, President Martelly issued amendments to the Political Constitution approved at the end of President Préval's term, providing for, among other things, the establishment of a Constitutional Council; a minimum quota of 30 per cent for women in public institutions, especially public services; streamlining of the appointment of the Prime Minister; and the legalization of multiple citizenship as a positive gesture towards the hundreds of thousands of Haitians currently living in different parts of the world and contributing to the present and future of Haiti, in particular through remittances, which currently total approximately $2 billion per year.

Moreover, the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary, approved by law seven years ago, which oversees the transparency and independence of the judiciary, is another indication of the progress currently being made in Haiti in terms of the rule of law and of the political will of the Haitian authorities to strengthen democracy and its institutions, given that the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary allows for the establishment of the Permanent Electoral Council, an essential body for the holding of elections in line with the provisions of the reformed Constitution.

Making the Office of the Ombudsman an official body and the appointment of a Minister for Human Rights and the Fight against Extreme Poverty are further proof of the hard work of the Government in the areas of the rule of law and the protection of human rights and the dividends that it is paying.

The confirmation by Parliament in May of Prime Minster Laurent Lamothe and his programme focused on the five priorities of President Martelly's Government — employment, the rule of law, environment, energy and education — are evidence of harmony and collaboration between the President and the Prime Minister, which are crucial for Haiti and its stability. The appointment of women to seven ministerial posts in a Cabinet of 22 further reflects the will of the President to apply the provisions of the reformed Constitution. Such will has also been reflected in various statements he has made, intended to ensure that future elections are carried out as soon as possible and with the greatest possible transparency. Furthermore, commendable work has been done by the Prime Minister to attract investment, fight corruption and smuggling, and promote industrial job creation projects, which are essential steps for Haiti's economic recovery.

An exceptional situation in Haitian political life is currently being played out in that the Senate, which is theoretically made up of 30 members, today has only 20 members as a result of the legal provision that terms automatically expire after six years with or without elections and that it is renewed by thirds every two years ; yet the quorum for its operation and voting continues to assume a Senate of 30 members. That continues to distort political life, with negative consequences for the democratic stabilization process in Haiti

In addition, there is at present a serious impasse in the formation of the Permanent Electoral Council. According to constitutional provisions, this body, which is responsible for organizing all elections in Haiti, should be composed of nine persons, three appointed by each of the powers of the State respectively. The appointments by the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the Executive did not comply with article 17.1 of the Constitution, on positive discrimination in favour of women, which mandates a representation of women in all public services of at least 30 per cent, as I already mentioned. Furthermore, the current situation in the Senate I have just described makes it almost impossible for the legislative power to reach agreement on its three nominees to the Permanent Electoral Council.

The formation of an electoral body of nine members in accordance with the stipulations of the Constitution is an unavoidable prerequisite for any elections; its establishment will determine how soon the pending elections can be held to renew a third of the Senate as well as to elect all municipal mayors and councillors. That is why MINUSTAH is currently working in coordination with the international community to promote dialogue and prepare the way for the soonest possible establishment of a Permanent Electoral Council that is legitimate and legal and that enjoys the broadest possible support.

While we can describe the security situation in Haiti as stable, it has the fragility inherent to a society in the process of being stabilized, characterized by precarious socioeconomic indicators and extreme poverty affecting a large portion of the country.

In this respect, I would add that the information I presented in March on issues including poverty, illiteracy, education and the diaspora have practically not changed. In practice, political violence has disappeared. There has also been a considerable drop in the number of kidnappings. Although murders are on the rise, Haiti still has one of the lowest per capita murder rates in the Caribbean and Central America, and those murders are linked to gang activity and rivalries. However, it has been very difficult to fight domestic violence and the abuse of women.

In a positive development during the month of May, Haitian authorities put an end to the illegal activities of a group of individuals linked to former members of the armed forces that were dissolved in 1995. They had occupied for some weeks public buildings and headquarters, calling for the re-establishment of the army and the payment of pensions. The President condemned the illegal occupations and called for public order. He also reiterated the fact that his current priority is to strengthen the Haitian National Police. The police, with the support of MINUSTAH, was thus able to evict the illegal occupiers from the 10 sites. Apparently, this matter is no longer an issue of concern for the public, and the Government has started, very practically, to train border police, coast guards and military engineers to work on infrastructure projects.

From the very beginning, MINUSTAH and the international community recognized the sovereign power of Haiti and its right to establish an army or restore the armed forces dissolved in 1995. However, with the same clarity, the Government and the public have been told that any establishment of forces of that kind should not be to the detriment of the development, strengthening and professionalization of the police. It has also been indicated that the international community sees other important development priorities for Haiti, which should be a priority over any potential restoration of the armed forces.

The police force has continued to evolve. On 30 August, Godson Orelus was appointed Director General ad interim of the police for a three-year period. In the same fashion, the Superior Council of the Haitian National Police endorsed a plan for 2012-2016 for the police, which, among other goals, states that by 2016 there will be a police force made up of more than 15,000 police officers. That task will call for the training of at least 5,000 new officials, or 1,200 a year until the end of President Martelly's term. That represents an unprecedented and considerable training effort, and consequently also a significant and unprecedented budgetary effort for the Haitian Government.

In terms of the police, the good news is that, after three months, the decision to dismiss 79 high officers with a history of crime and corruption from the force became effective. That serves to improve the credibility of the main security body in Haiti.

The strengthening of the Haitian National Police is the highest priority for MINUSTAH, both because of what it means for consolidating the rule of law and improving security and because it makes it possible for a responsible conclusion of the Mission. In that, in accordance with resolution 2012 (2011), MINUSTAH has reduced its numbers. As mentioned by the Secretary-General in paragraph 50 of his report, given the progress in this area, he recommends that the Security Council consider a reduction from 7,340 to 6,270 troops and from 3,241 to 2,601 police, with a consequent drop in civilian personnel, in accordance with the reduced scope of MINUSTAH's activities.

Given the Secretary-General's proposal, the Mission, together with the United Nations country team, has consulted the Government of Haiti on a consolidation and reconfiguration plan for MINUSTAH in accordance with the suggested reductions proposed to the Security Council. The plan, which is in a working phase at the moment, has as its primary goal making it possible for the Mission to fully carry out its task, thereby concluding its activities in Haiti. Among the main consolidation measures are the reduction of military personnel in five departments. They will be replaced by police officers. In those departments, the civilian representation of MINUSTAH will be decreased to an operational minimum. We plan to progressively apply this model in the coming period to facilitate the concentration and reduction of MINUSTAH's activities in a rational fashion. Barring unforeseen contingencies, we are heading towards a final state of the Mission at a foreseeable point in time.

Furthermore, events linked with sporadic and isolated protests by the sectors of the population that are most threatened by the fragile socioeconomic situation in the country highlight the fact that peace and security will be very fragile without economic and social development measures, which generate hope for the future in the population. We are already seeing this in different areas such as Cap-Haïtien and Les Cayes.

On human rights and humanitarian and correctional affairs, the Government's efforts and international cooperation have made it possible to reduce the number of inhabitants of internally displaced person camps to 390,000. That is a remarkable effort, since it has reduced these numbers by 73 per cent. After the earthquake, the figure was 1.5 million people. However, the situation has deteriorated, as work by international organizations and non-governmental organizations has been curtailed due to the lack of financing. At the current pace, by the end of 2012 there will still be over 250,000 people living in camps for internally displaced persons. We therefore encourage organizations and Governments to cooperate in order to enable people to promptly and satisfactorily return to their places of origin or relocate to new areas that will welcome them on a permanent basis.

Tropical storm Isaac, although it struck only in the south of Haiti, showed the fragile day-to-day reality of the Haitian people, as the loss of crops in that area and the paradoxical drought in other regions have caused a reappearance of hunger. Although hunger had not completely disappeared from the Haitian landscape, it had almost completely disappeared as a social and humanitarian problem. I must note that the response of the Haitian Government to this national emergency, together with the United Nations, and its response to the difficult food situation was appropriate and took the longer view, as shown in its appropriate coordination with humanitarian actors and the United Nations system, which made it possible to mitigate the crisis and prepare for new emergencies.

Haiti continues to face serious challenges, especially with regard to the cholera epidemic, which is hanging over thousands of people every time the weather or social conditions worsen. Although it is true that there has not been a severe resurgence of the disease, there are continuous cases with fatal consequences. Cholera affects the entire island of Hispaniola, and we are therefore working on a plan to intensify prevention, fight the disease better and engage in all possible efforts to mitigate its effects.

Among the many people living under difficult conditions in Haiti are those in prolonged detention, which are really illegal detentions. We have worked together with the Ministry of Justice, and we will quickly conduct concerted efforts in order to reduce and, if possible, put an end to this phenomenon, which is a serious violation of the human rights of hundreds of Haitian citizens.

Most youth in Haiti do not have access to professional training because of economic reasons. That predisposes them to social exclusion and makes them a vulnerable population. They do not have the option of responding tomorrow to a State based on the rule of law or of fulfilling their social responsibilities, thereby fulfilling their own economic needs or those of their families. In order to counteract this vicious circle, strengthen the rule of law and promote peace and coexistence, MINUSTAH is supporting and financing violence reduction programmes in communities. For example, the Mission has supported 36 high-density manpower projects, which are focused on working on watersheds and urban infrastructure and rehabilitating canals. Those projects have made it possible to offer temporary jobs to 51,000 at-risk young people, of whom 30 per cent are women. The implementation of those projects has also helped to mitigate flood risk, improve urban sanitation in the wider community and present the world of work as a valid option.

MINUSTAH has also devoted funding to quick-impact projects for earthquake-affected communities and to projects that focus on public lighting, road rehabilitation, local infrastructure such as multi-purpose municipal institutions, rule-of-law infrastructure, including peace courts, as well as education, including schools and municipal and departmental public institutions.

Finally, peace missions are the concrete expression of a moral value, which makes them respectable on all continents. Participation therein is an honour for their personnel and for the countries whose nationals are working to carry out the lofty task of achieving peace and defending it wherever necessary. The Secretary-General has recalled that the first priority is the reputation of the United Nations. It is for that reason, inter alia, that in Haiti we have intensified our zero-tolerance measures against abuse of all kinds, especially the sexual abuse of minors.

After eight years of work, the peacebuilding achievements registered by MINUSTAH in Haiti are clear. However, in order to continue to make progress, we must pursue our efforts to strengthen the rule of law, which will make it possible to harmonize the peace dividends achieved to date.

In the quest to devise mechanisms that will strengthen those efforts, appropriate solutions should be found to the current challenges facing Haiti. Finding paths that facilitate dialogue and consensus among Haitians will be a key factor in building a country that can stand on its own and is equipped with democratic institutions that are capable of providing appropriate responses to the numerous challenges facing it now and in future.

However, crucial economic and social challenges remain for Haiti. I wish to reiterate that security, the rule of law and economic and social development are three interdependent concepts that are essential to enabling Haiti to launch a process of renewal and consolidate a lasting peace in the country. In the absence of tangible progress that benefits the people in the areas of food, employment, health, housing and the environment, it could be difficult to maintain the current level of security in that Caribbean nation, which is due in great part to the contributions made by the international community since 2004.

The time has come for public, private, national and foreign investment. The time has come for projects to be carried out that demonstrate that the economy is moving forward and that Haiti and its people have a future.

Here I should like to pay tribute to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, former President Bill Clinton, for his ongoing efforts and initiatives aimed at encouraging investment in Haiti. Of course, these issues go far beyond the tasks and mandate of MINUSTAH, but I feel I must make mention of the situation, as this aspect is essential to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Mission and the completion of the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council, so that there will be no need to return to Haiti once again.

If efforts in the areas of the economy and employment bear fruit, I anticipate a reconfiguration of this peace Mission into a political mission of the United Nations, with emphasis on the rule of law and human rights as well as an advisory and monitoring component on police work, by means of a mission embedded within the Haitian National Police itself. I believe that this would be the best possible final stage of the work of MINUSTAH in Haiti.

The President: I thank Mr. Fernández Amunátegui for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala.

Allow me to deviate from past practice by taking the floor at the beginning of our debate instead of at the end. I am doing this because I consider it an honour for Guatemala, as well as a personal honour for myself, to preside over this first substantive meeting of the Security Council during the month of October. This is for us a historic event; this is the first time that Guatemala has assumed the presidency of the Security Council since the founding of the United Nations. I did not want to wait until the end of the debate to make mention of that fact. We are all the more pleased given the topic of today's debate: the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), above all because of Guatemala's commitment to Haiti.

As the Council is aware, the countries of our region feel a sense of ownership regarding MINUSTAH. Twelve Latin American countries contribute troops and police; and the Force Commander has always hailed from our region, as has, most of the time, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We are pleased that a Guatemalan, Edmond Mulet, has in the past occupied this important post. We are also pleased that our troops have been present in Haiti since the establishment of the first Mission in 1993, and continuously since the establishment of MINUSTAH.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of making a brief visit to our contingent of 137 personnel in Port-au-Prince; I also took that opportunity to visit MINUSTAH headquarters. This debate therefore has a strong personal resonance for me, for my country, for my region, and, of course, for the United Nations.

In that regard, I would like to make just three brief points.

First, we believe that the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/678) paints a promising picture. It combines the required caution with the hope necessary to continue moving forward. We congratulate Haiti on the swearing in of a new Government, the publication of the correction version of the constitutional amendments and the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary. All of those achievements represent important milestones in Haiti's efforts to strengthen its democratic and rule-of-law institutions.

We are also pleased that the establishment of the Permanent Electoral Council is back on track after some setbacks, and we trust that the electoral process in Haiti will resume after delays of almost one year.

Secondly, Guatemala will remain committed to Haiti and to United Nations peacekeeping operations for as long as necessary. We support the MINUSTAH reconfiguration and consolidation process. We look forward to more details on this new consolidation plan. Carrying it out will require intensive coordination among a wide range of national and international stakeholders, and it will be subject to various development and implementation timelines.

With regard to security, we note that the level of operational effectiveness of the Haitian National Police will constitute the main benchmark in setting the pace for the drawdown of the Mission's uniformed personnel.

We fully support the development of a transition compact that will make it possible to measure the progress made in the stabilization process, going beyond the work of MINUSTAH into the realms of development and institution-building. In that respect, we welcome the recent launch of the aid coordination mechanism presented by the Haitian authorities last week in New York at the beginning of the general debate.

Thirdly, I would like in particular to commend the work done by Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MINUSTAH during a period marked by difficulties and challenges. He has carried his work forward in an outstanding manner, as evidenced this morning by his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General. Guatemala will continue to support his work.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that Guatemala fully supports the international community's efforts to assist Haiti in the reconstruction and strengthening of its institutions through a permanent and strategic partnership aimed at creating a better future for Haiti.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Fernández Amunátegui for his briefing. Before I begin, I would like to congratulate Guatemala on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the first time.

In February, the United States led a Security Council mission to Haiti. The mission witnessed at first hand the great strides that the Haitian people are making in rebuilding their country following the devastating earthquake. However, we also came away with serious concerns, which we expressed at our debate in March (see S/PV.6732).

At that time, political gridlock threatened Haiti's stability and progress. The Prime Minister had resigned after only four months in office. Relations between the executive and legislative branches of Government had deteriorated. The appointment of key officials and important constitutional amendments were stalled. Election planning lagged. Both in Haiti and in the Chamber, the Security Council called on Haiti's political leaders to set aside their disparate interests and to come together for the sake of the nation.

Seven months later, Haiti's future looks more promising. As Secretary Clinton noted at the ministerial-level meeting of Haiti's partners last week, the country is starting to move forward. Haiti's political leaders are showing a willingness to cooperate and to put the Haitian people first. It is imperative that they continue to do so.

On 14 May, the Haitian Parliament ratified the appointment of a new Prime Minister. On 19 June, President Martelly published a series of constitutional amendments that strengthen democracy and the rule of law in Haiti. Those amendments pave the way towards an independent judiciary under the Superior Council of the Judiciary and mandate the formation of the Permanent Electoral Council (CEP). We look forward to providing support to the Superior Council and to the final establishment of the CEP so that the long-overdue elections can proceed.

The Government of Haiti is also tackling gender inequality with a new constitutional requirement that women hold at least 30 per cent of Government positions. We welcome the possibility that many more Haitian women will now be able to shape the future of the country.

On security, the Government of Haiti has assumed greater responsibility for supporting the Haitian National Police (HNP) with increased financial resources and a deeper commitment to security and justice sector reform. The Government hosted a summit meeting on the police in June and endorsed a five-year national development plan for the HNP that aims to boost its size and quality. For the HNP to play its rightful role in protecting the people of Haiti and in enabling the country's development, the sustained support of the Government and the international community for that development plan is essential. That must include greater attention to police recruitment and training and to combating sexual and gender-based violence. Ensuring that the HNP has sufficient personnel and the resources to do its critical work remains a top priority.

Improvements in security and the rule of law will create more economic opportunities for the Haitian people. The joint aid coordination mechanism, recently launched by the Prime Minister, can help ensure the alignment of donor assistance with Haitian priorities, as well as the transparent and efficient use of international aid. That mechanism is an important step and deserves our support. We call on all countries that have pledged assistance to fulfil their commitments through the joint aid coordination mechanism.

As the Secretary-General's report of 31 August (S/2012/678) details, Haiti has made progress, since the Security Council debate in March, in addressing the international community's concerns. We should not forget that the presence and the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) have been central to the country's recovery from the earthquake and to its recent progress. The Mission has helped to provide a more secure and stable environment in Haiti; it has strengthened the country's institutions, protected civilians and safeguarded human rights.

The United States supports renewing the mandate of MINUSTAH for another year, so that it can continue assisting the Haitian Government and people in meeting the challenges ahead and can hasten the day when United Nations peacekeepers are no longer needed. The reconfiguration and consolidation of the MINUSTAH footprint in Haiti is a delicate balancing act that we cannot afford to get wrong. So as not to jeopardize overall security, the United States supports the Secretary-General's recommended consolidation and partial drawdown of MINUSTAH forces from the post-earthquake surge to nearly pre-earthquake levels. Those changes will reflect the progress that Haiti has made but will also enable MINUSTAH to continue executing its mandate effectively.

Moving forward, we must remain mindful of the risk that too quick a drawdown could undermine the gains achieved thus far. The United Nations must also ensure that MINUSTAH personnel consistently adhere to the highest standards in performing their work, that any allegations of sexual misconduct are thoroughly investigated and that the perpetrators are held to account.

With that adjustment, the United States will consider future changes in the MINUSTAH force level on the basis of the conditions on the ground. We look forward to the time in the not-so-distant future when that force will no longer be needed. However, much work remains to be done in Haiti. For example, there are far too few jobs and insufficient housing to meet the needs of Haitian families.

The United States recognizes the importance of socioeconomic development in cementing stability and catalyzing long-term growth. We have been working with the Haitian Government, the Inter-American Development Bank and other partners on a comprehensive development plan for Haiti's northern areas that can attract investment to create jobs and spur economic development. We have just signed a partnership agreement with Haiti that outlines America's contribution, under Haitian leadership, to Haiti's national health plan for the next five years. In addition, the housing of internally displaced persons remains a priority. Forthcoming United States housing developments will shelter thousands.

Haiti is gradually moving beyond crisis management to a long-term recovery. Its democratic institutions are becoming stronger. Security has improved in parts of the country and the lives of the Haitian people are brightening.

The United States will remain a steadfast friend of Haiti. We are hopeful that, with the continued support of MINUSTAH, the contributions of international partners and the hard work and determination of the Haitian people, Haiti will indeed reach its full potential.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I take this opportunity to underscore the words of Ambassador Rice with regard to the fact that international assistance should ensure economic development and the creation of jobs over the long term. That is indeed the only way in which the Mission can succeed.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by congratulating you and your country, Mr. President, at this important time for the friendly nation of Guatemala, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council — as you said, for the first time in its history — for the month of October. Half way through Guatemala's term on the Security Council, you can already be proud of your country's contribution to the work of the Council.

Allow me also to thank Special Representative Mariano Fernández Amunátegui for his briefing and to convey to him and the entire team of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) our full appreciation for their efforts to assist Haiti in its stabilization and development.

More than two years after the disaster that struck the Republic of Haiti, significant and notable progress has been made, following the delays already pointed out in implementing certain key measures in the country's stabilization process. Morocco welcomes the efforts of the Haitian authorities to conclude the institutional reforms needed to strengthen the rule of law.

The Senate's approval of the appointment of a new prime minister, the publication of the amended 1987 Constitution, the appointment of judges to the appeals court, the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the launching of the process to implement an Electoral Council are all significant and essential stages carried out to bolster State institutions in accordance with the commitments undertaken by the Government.

Also, the participation of women in the Government has been raised to 30 per cent. We welcome that and the allocation to women of the strategic portfolios of finance and tourism. We also welcome the adoption and promulgation of the law on the functions of the Ombudsman.

Turning to security, we welcome the peaceful manner in which the authorities re-established order following the incidents of 17 April incited by former members of the army and young recruits. That incident demonstrates the urgent need for the Haitian Government to accelerate the training of the 15,000 police officers stipulated by the five-year development plan in order to cover the entire territory by 2016.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, while significant progress has been made in removing rubble and rehousing displaced persons, the needs remain enormous. More than 400,000 people are still living in more than 500 camps. The situation is all the more worrisome because the gradual withdrawal of various humanitarian groups due to the lack of resources, which contributes to the deterioration of the situation.

Since its establishment, MINUSTAH has amply and decisively contributed to the operations for the recovery and stabilization of the country. We were able to see that with our own eyes when the Council visited Haiti at the beginning of the year. We must congratulate the entire Mission staff for what they have accomplished to date despite obstacles and hardships. While giving full credit to the Haitian Government for taking charge of the tasks indispensible to the safety and well-being of the people, we believe that MINUSTAH should continue to support the Government's efforts and should gradually reduce its presence as the situation improves and stabilizes. In that regard, my country supports the renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2012/678). The proposals in that report with respect to a reduction in MINUSTAH staffing strike us as realistic for a smooth transition and a progressive withdrawal, with MINUSTAH concentrating its activity on the primary tasks identified in the report.

More than two years after the terrible earthquake that struck Haiti, the task before the Haitian authorities remains difficult and filled with challenges. It is up to them, of course, to redouble their efforts, demonstrate their unshakeable commitment to reconstructing the country, reinforce good governance and set in motion the reforms needed to rebuild trust, consolidate stability and encourage outside investment. Nonetheless, the support and assistance of the international community, the United Nations and international financial institutions remains indispensable and critical to enable the country to return to normalcy and meet the aspirations of its people. Morocco, for its part, whose Royal Armed Forces contributed to Haiti's return to peace and helped to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the 2010 quake, remains committed alongside the friendly people of Haiti to strengthening the gains made and to building a peaceful and prosperous future for Haiti.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): Please allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Council. I am indeed very honoured to be here when you are presiding over the Council, especially since you mentioned that this is the first time that your country is presiding over the Council. By association we are very honoured. I also wish to express our deep gratitude to your delegation for having been our partner in the Council and for our very close cooperation with your Ambassador and the entire delegation. We wish to thank them for organizing today's debate.

I would like to join others in expressing our sincere thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández Amunátegui for presenting the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (S/2012/678) and for his briefing on the recent developments in Haiti.

We are encouraged by developments in Haiti over the past few months, including the appointment of Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe and its ratification by the Parliament in May. Those developments have ended the political uncertainty and underscored the collective resolve of Haiti's leadership to work in a constructive manner to address various issues related to governance, the economy, elections and reconstruction.

We commend the steps taken by the new Government for improving the situation with regard to law and order, attracting foreign investment, promoting new industrial projects and combating smuggling. We also commend the steps to resolve differences between the executive and legislative branches of the Government and hope that the newly established Constitutional Court, the Electoral Council and the Superior Council of the Judicary will satisfactorily settle the outstanding issues.

For those steps to succeed, Haiti requires the continued support of the international community. In that connection, we commend MINUSTAH for assisting the Haitian National Police in ensuring a stable security situation across the country. We think international support needs to be enhanced, particularly in the implementation of the 2012-2016 Haitian national police development plan. We hope that the local elections due since last year will be held soon and will help in rebuilding democratic institutions at the grass roots level.

While there has been substantial progress in resettling the internally displaced persons and addressing their humanitarian needs, recovery and reconstruction efforts continue to face a number of challenges. Nearly 400,000 persons remain dependent on humanitarian assistance for their basic survival. Assistance is also required to fight the cholera epidemic. For long-term improvement in the situation, the international community needs to align its efforts with Haiti's national development priorities. In that regard, we welcome the creation of the Housing and Public Buildings Construction Unit in the office of the Prime Minister, which will contribute to the improved coordination and effective implementation of humanitarian programmes. We also welcome the new integrated strategic framework for 2013-2016, drafted by MINUSTAH in consultation with the authorities in Haiti.

MINUSTAH and its leadership played an important role in the positive developments in Haiti. MINUSTAH has not only helped Haitian stakeholders in resolving their differences; it has also lent its hand in capacity-building and in the recovery efforts of national institutions and in ensuring overall security and stability in the country.

With Haitian national institutions assuming a greater role, MINUSTAH should gradually hand over its core functions to the Haitian National Police and focus on long-term stabilization and development goals. In that context, we support the recommendations of the Secretary-General to narrow MINUSTAH's activities to a core set of mandated tasks that are achievable within a reasonable time frame. MINUSTAH's drawdown should, however, be based on the evolving situation in the country rather than as a fixed timeline.

India has remained a major contributor to MINUSTAH with three contingents of formed police units (FPUs).

Our FPUs are playing an important role in maintaining peace and stability in Haiti, including the guarding of the Presidential Palace. In addition, the Indian FPUs have arranged blood donation camps for the benefit of the Haitian people and earned their goodwill.

India remains committed to supporting Haiti in its reconstruction activities. In September, India donated $5 million for the construction of 500 low-cost housing units for the victims of the January 2010 earthquake. Earlier, India donated $5 million in cash as disaster relief assistance. India has also been contributing $500,000 annually since 2009 to the Central Emergency Response Fund, which continues to play an important role in recovery work in Haiti. India is also cooperating with Haiti in capacity-building and human resource development by offering scholarships under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme.

In conclusion, let me state that, while Haiti has come a long way since the devastating earthquake, the international community should continue its engagement so that Haiti is able to achieve sustainable peace, security, stability and development. As Haiti assumes the chairmanship of the Caribbean Community next year, we convey our best wishes to the Government and people of Haiti and we assure them of our continued partnership.

Mr. Wittig (Germany) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you and your country, Mr. President, on you assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the first time, as well as to thank you for having convened this important debate. I wish you and my friend Ambassador Rosenthal and your very able team every success this coming. There is no need to underline the fact that your country can count on Germany's full support.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fernández Amunátegui for his briefing.

I would like to focus my statement on three main topics: the current political situation, the security situation, including the need to further strengthen the Haitian National Police, and the role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) under its reconfiguration.

We welcome the fact that there are clear indications that Haiti is moving towards a better future, albeit slowly. We have seen some important milestones, such as the swearing in of a new Government and the publication of the corrected version of the constitutional amendments that were pending when the Security Council visited Haiti earlier this year. At the same time, we are concerned about the refusal by the Haitian Senate and Parliament to name their representatives to the Permanent Electoral Council and about the recent withdrawal of the three members nominated by the Superior Council of the Judiciary. A functioning Electoral Council is indispensable for the elections mandated by Haiti's Constitution. All parties need to make a renewed and speedy effort towards a credible Permanent Electoral Council with all members on board. Preparations for the elections must begin without further delay.

We are encouraged by the progress reported on the security front, including Government measures to contain elements of the former armed forces who had been illegally occupying sites throughout the country. Security and stability should increasingly be provided by an effective Haitian National Police. We welcome President Martelly's stated intention to focus on the continued strengthening of that institution, so that it can provide security throughout the entire territory of Haiti. We are encouraged by recent steps undertaken by the Government to increase the number of police recruits, in particular female ones.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti should not be in charge of long-term reconstruction efforts. The Mission needs to continue to draw down its post-earthquake surge in activities. In that sense, I welcome the suggestions contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/678) about MINUSTAH's reconfiguration and consolidation plan. The Secretary-General's proposal that MINUSTAH further concentrate its efforts on mentoring and developing the Haitian National Police, and gradually phase out operational policing activities, goes in the right direction. A corresponding reduction of MINUSTAH's troops, as proposed by the Secretary-General, seems feasible but requires a further build-up of the Haitain police. That is why clear benchmarks will be required as foreseen in MINUSTAH's reconfiguration and consolidation plan.

Finally, I would like once again to thank the troop — and police-contributing countries for all their efforts. We will continue to give our full support to the Mission and to the Government and people of Haiti.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): Allow me, at the outset, Mr. President, to congratulate you and the delegation of Guatemala on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I would like to assure you of our full cooperation and support. It is also my pleasure to congratulate Germany on its successful presidency and on all its efforts in steering us through the busy month of September. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his recent report on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/678), and to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández Amunátegui for his briefing.

I would like to commend the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations country team, which continue to play a crucial role in supporting the recovery and stabilization of Haiti. As the Secretary-General noted in his report, during the reporting period a number of long-awaited political milestones were achieved, indicating that the process of stabilization continues to progress in Haiti. The achievements include the swearing in of a new Government, the publication of a corrected version of the constitutional amendments that provided the basis for the organization of the Permanent Electoral Council and the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary.

We also commend the steps taken by the Government to move forward with the country's socioeconomic development. At the same time, redoubled efforts are needed to combat unemployment and poverty. In the light of the progress achieved in recent months, it is essential to continue consistent efforts in rebuilding the country, strengthening institutions, attracting investment, promoting sustainable development and advancing the democratic agenda.

Political stability in the country is a key factor for the stabilization and development of Haiti. It is therefore important that all political leaders take a responsible approach and engage in constructive political dialogue to address their differences in a spirit of compromise. Such dialogue is particularly important for the holding of credible and long overdue elections.

We note with satisfaction that the overall security situation has been relatively stable during the reporting period. However, the high rate of criminality remains a matter of serious concern. While the role of MINUSTAH in the maintenance of overall security and stability remains vital, we note that the Haitian National Police (HNP) continue to gradually improve. We commend the Government's recent successful measures to dislodge illegal armed groups. Close cooperation between the HNP and MINUSTAH is critical to effectively addressing security challenges and to ensuring that the police move forward to reach the capacity necessary to handle full responsibility for the provision of internal security.

The protection of vulnerable groups, particularly women, children and internally displaced persons, should remain the priority. The humanitarian situation in Haiti continues to show signs of improvement as the number of internally displaced persons living in camps has declined. However, significant humanitarian challenges remain. Continued strong international engagement and efforts by the Haitian authorities are crucial to ensuring that all pressing humanitarian needs are met.

Lastly, I would like to express our support for the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of MINUSTAH, taking into account the proposed adjustments pertaining to a reconfiguration and conditions-based consolidation of the Mission.

Mr. Andrabi (Pakistan): I am privileged to deliver this statement on behalf of my Permanent Representative. We welcome you, Mr. President, to the Council. We congratulate Guatemala on assuming the presidency of the Council, and we commend Germany for its able stewardship in September. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document S/2012/678.

Pakistan fully supports peace and progress in Haiti, which is a collective objective for the Haitian people, the Council and the international community. The brave and resilient people of Haiti have made important strides towards stability and development. The devastating earthquake of 2010 reversed the gains achieved incrementally over many years. It is heartening that a new and promising Haiti is emerging from that tragedy.

In that regard, the Secretary-General has also noted important milestones reached in Haiti recently. Those include the formation of a new Government, the publication of constitutional amendments and the establishment of a Superior Council of the Judiciary. On the road to political stability and economic prosperity, such measures have far-reaching significance.

In parallel with reaching political milestones, the Haitian Government is also taking important steps to attract foreign investment, improve governance and promote industrial projects. We hope that the new aid coordination framework will strengthen the capacity of the Haitian Government to manage external resources with the support of the Haiti Reconstruction Fund.

We share the optimism that Haitian leaders have an opportunity to make genuine progress in rebuilding the nation and strengthening institutions. The initiatives of the Haitian Government must be supplemented by greater economic and trade cooperation from the international community.

Besides the commitment of the Haitian Government, progress and development in Haiti are also attributable to the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The Mission is already implementing a challenging mandate in the areas of security, support for the political process, the protection of vulnerable groups, justice and corrections, and human rights monitoring.

The reconfiguration or drawdown of MINUSTAH must therefore be planned carefully and be based on the situation on the ground. It should not lead to a reversal of gains painstakingly achieved in Haiti.

We look forward to the transition compact that MINUSTAH will work out with its stakeholders with a view to setting out precise benchmarks in the area of security, the rule of law, accountability mechanisms and legislative regulatory frameworks.

The political developments in Haiti need to be consolidated by a strong security sector. Besides providing safety and security to the Haitian people, a self-sustaining national police institution is also essential for the eventual withdrawal of MINUSTAH.

The objectives and benchmarks of the Haitian National Police development plans, presented by MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police, must be forthrightly met. Recent steps taken by the Haitian authorities to increase the number of police recruits, in particular females, are encouraging and we welcome such steps. The capactity-building and training of the Haitian National Police, together with budgetary support for its expenses, should remain a matter of high priority.

Today's debate should also underscore the challenge of addressing the humanitarian situation in Haiti. The ongoing cholera epidemic, food insecurity and the extreme vulnerability to national disasters increase the humanitarian challenge. We will urge greater coordination and cohesion among different actors engaged in humanitarian work. We will also caution against donor fatigue, which can result from protracted crises such as the one unfortunately faced by Haiti.

Pakistan has been a participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions in Haiti since 1993. As part of

MINUSTAH, two formed police units from Pakistan have deployed since the 2010 earthquake.

In 2005, the people of Pakistan suffered the worst earthquake of their history. Five years later, when a similar tragedy befell our brothers and sisters of Haiti, the people of Pakistan felt their pain as our own. Our solidarity with the Haitian people has not waned since then. It is with that spirit that we will continue to support the people of Haiti in their quest for stability and progress, as well as to uphold the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of their country.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate your country on assuming the presidency of the Council. I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, for his briefing.

I would like to associate myself with the statement to be made later by the observer of the European Union, as well as that to be delivered by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Group of Friends.

Since our last meeting in March (see S/PV.6732), undeniable progress has been made in Haiti, on the political and institutional fronts first and foremost. I will not list the measures taken by the Haitian Government, as others before me have already done so. The political and institutional stability of the country has been strengthened.

With regard to security, the Secretary-General has recalled that the situation is calm but precarious. Crime remains a problem, particularly in Port-au-Prince, but no more so than it is in other countries of the region. The Haitian National Police has demonstrated its ability to undertake comprehensive operations with the support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

With regard to the humanitarian issues and reconstruction, the decrease in the number of internally displaced persons, the clearing up of the earthquake damage and the progress with regard to health and education should be noted. After a downturn in the gross national product, Haiti has once again found the path towards growth. However, the country continues to face humanitarian challenges, with 390,000 people living in refugee camps and a cholera epidemic that has not yet been stemmed.

Allow me to mention three of the challenges that remain. The swift holding of local and partial legislative elections is essential, as those elections have been delayed for too long, as Mr. Fernández Amunátegui noted. To that end, a Permanent Electoral Council, based on consensus and in line with the spirit of the Constitution, must be established. We call upon all the political stakeholders concerned in Haiti to work towards that objective. France stands ready to provide its support, in particular through MINUSTAH, for the holding of free, credible and transparent elections.

The Haitian National Police is not yet able to independently guarantee security and stability in Haiti. We noted the objectives presented by the Haitian authorities for the period 2012 to 2016, including the goal of increasing the number of police officers from 10,000 to 15,000. We stand ready to back those efforts, which must not only be quantitative, but which must also strengthen the administrative and training capacities, as well as the integrity and the image of the police. The State's budget must reflect that priority.

Aid for rebuilding must continue. The eradication of cholera deserves an appropriate response. France stands ready to uphold its financial commitments made by the President of the Republic, which amount to €326 million. We welcome the new framework for aid coordination that was announced by Prime Minister Lamothe last week in New York. Haiti cannot depend on international solidarity alone for its development, which is why we support President Martelly's efforts to make Haiti more attractive to foreign investors.

The situation is changing and it is only natural that the United Nations presence on the ground does the same. We stand ready to extend MINUSTAH's mandate. We must continue the drawdown of troop levels, because the levels present today are no longer in line with the needs of the country two and a half years after the earthquake. The priority, more than ever, should be national ownership through the strengthening of the rule of law and the principal tools, such as the Haitian National Police and the judiciary.

We must also provide the Mission with a credible time frame. We are not abandoning Haiti, but we must be clear to Haitians with regard to what is achievable in a reasonable period.

We therefore support the current discussions between the Mission and the Secretariat on a five-year consolidation plan.

I would like to end by commending the work of the police, troops and civilians of MINUSTAH, who have been contributing to the maintenance of stability in Haiti for eight years. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his work at the Head of the Mission and his vision of what must be achieved in Haiti.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to welcome you, Mr. President, to the Council and to congratulate Guatemala on presiding over the Council for the month of October. I would also like to wish our colleague, Mr. Rosenthal, and his team every success and to assure them of our support.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like thank Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui for his introduction of the excellent report (S/2012/678), which gives us a clear idea of the situation in Haiti and the progress that has been made but, above all, of the enormous scope of the work still to be done. We also welcome the presence of our colleague Ambassador Jean Cazeau.

We of course align ourselves with the statement to be made later by the observer of the European Union.

Today, with significant support from the international community in general and the United Nations in particular, Haitians have embarked upon the long and difficult process of rebuilding their country, a process that has a wider and more coherent goal that goes beyond repairing the terrible earthquake's material damage and aiding its victims, namely, to give the country stable and democratic institutions founded on the rule of law, ensure respect for human rights and guarantee security for the people, as well as economic and social development and prosperity for the country.

I will not dwell on the close interdependence of those three elements, but it is clear that, without security and good governance, founded on a solid democratic base, and without stable, functioning institutions, there can be no improvement in economic conditions or reconstruction. Similarly, without an economic and employment recovery it will be extremely difficult to strengthen security in the country.

I would like to briefly discuss two of those issues. First, concerning the area of politics and the rule of law, there is no doubt that progress has been made. The country has a new Government that has the support of the people. It also appears that the instability that characterized Haitian political life for several months has been overcome. The new political situation translates into growing demands on the Haitian authorities to make progress with essential democratic reforms. In that context, the entry into force of various constitutional amendments, the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the creation of the Permanent Electoral Council — even if the latter is still incomplete — are all significant examples of progress.

We encourage the Haitian authorities to continue in that direction: consolidating democratic institutions and practices, political transparency and credibility of the rule of law and the administration of justice — above all, ensuring, when Haitians are ultimately summoned to the polls, the fairness, transparency and credibility of those elections, and thus avoiding betrayal of the Haitian people's legitimate aspirations and damaging the confidence of the international community.

The humanitarian situation and the protection of human rights are also matters for serious concern. The marginalization of especially vulnerable groups, the still large numbers of displaced persons and incidents of gender violence are a major worry and require an effective response.

My second point is about security and the role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). While we are pleased with the progress made in improving the capacity of the Haitian National Police, we are compelled to conclude that they have a long way to go before they will be able to assume full responsibility for providing security in the country, fighting the criminal activity that is, sadly, growing, and protecting their borders. As a result, for the time being, MINUSTAH's presence is essential. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposal for a renewal of the Mission's mandate for a new term of 12 months and for its reconfiguration and gradual drawdown. That drawdown must of necessity go hand in hand with the parallel strengthening of the capacity of the national police, particularly aimed at enabling it to gradually take on the responsibilities currently assigned to MINUSTAH. We also believe that, in terms of humanitarian and financial security, priority must be given to strengthening the National police and not to other structures that are draining limited resources and could also become new sources of instability for Haiti.

We continue to fully support the Haitian people on its difficult road to reconstruction, democracy and development. We are convinced that they can overcome the current challenges with the solidarity and active support of the international community.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere recognition of the extraordinary work under what are often difficult conditions accomplished by the men and women of MINUSTAH over the last eight years.

Mr. Sun Xiaobo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala for presiding over today's meeting. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Fernández Amunátegui, for his briefing.

Haiti has made some progress in the areas of stability and development recently. The swearing-in of a new Government, the publication of constitutional amendments and the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary are positive achievements by the Haitian Government in its efforts to strengthen its democratic and rule-of-law institutions, and China welcomes them. At the same time, we also note that Haiti faces colossal challenges in its political, economic and humanitarian situations. It has a long way to go in its process of rebuilding and reestablishing peace, and it needs the continuing support and advice of the international community.

I would like to emphasize three points. First, ensuring political stability is an important prerequisite for maintaining Haiti's security and development. China welcomes the compromise reached through political consultation by the relevant parties, and hopes that the establishment of the new Government in Haiti will help facilitate the democratic process and political reconciliation there. We hope that all the relevant parties will take the opportunity to unite in order to enhance mutual trust and consolidate hard-won achievements.

Secondly, the chief issue that must be urgently addressed is the speeding-up of the economic recovery and reconstruction. Haiti's slow progress in those areas has meant that many refugees from the earthquake are still surviving on assistance. The country faces major difficulties in the areas of reconstruction, attracting investment, creating jobs and promoting sustainable development. The international community must devote serious attention to those problems. The Haitian Government should redouble its efforts to deal with unemployment and poverty, strengthen institution-building and improve its capacity to govern. We also hope that the international community will honour its pledges to Haiti, increase the effectiveness of its aid and provide constructive support for Haiti's rebuilding and development.

Thirdly, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) plays an indispensable role there. China commends the Special Representative, Mr. Fernández Amunátegui, and MINUSTAH as a whole for its efforts and contribution to maintaining peace and stability in Haiti. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal for MINUSTAH's consolidation plan and the extension of its mandate for one year. We hope that MINUSTAH will continue to implement the Council's mandate, help Haiti maintain peace and stability, facilitate its political process and strengthen capacity-building for its rule-of-law and Government institutions.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on Guatemala's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

My delegation wishes your delegation every success in carrying out its functions.

I would next like to thank Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, not only for the briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (S/2012/678), but also for the praiseworthy work that the Mission has accomplished in Haiti.

My delegation will address the issue before us from three angles — the political, security and humanitarian.

Last March, during the consideration of the previous report on the sociopolitical situation in Haiti (S/2012/128), my country expressed its concern with regard to the current political, security and humanitarian problems in the country. Today, six months later, the report presented to us allows us to assess the progress made by policymakers and the Haitian people in continuing the process of stabilization in their country and in establishing the rule of law.

Following the resignation of the former Prime Minister, Mr. Garry Conille, Haiti once again was dragged into a political crisis that delayed political and economic reforms that the country was to undertake. In May, therefore, Togo gladly welcomed the confirmation by the Parliament of the appointment of Prime Minister Laurent Salvador Lamothe and his statement of general policy, which was an important message regarding the collective political commitment of policymakers in Haiti to continue necessary reforms in order to re-establish the rule of law and create and solidify public institutions, as well as improve the well-being of people. That message was followed by the publication of a revised version of constitutional amendments, which had been ready for adoption since June 2011. My country welcomes the publication of those amendments, which allow for, inter alia, the creation of a Permanent Electoral Council and a Constitutional Council, a 30 per cent quota of women in the Government and the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary to strengthen the independence of that branch of Government.

Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that the establishment of the first Permanent Electoral Council in the country, responsible for the organization of elections, is still taking time owing to controversies surrounding the moral fibre of its members and its ability to conduct credible elections that are acceptable to everyone. That is why my country calls upon all Haitian political actors to continue along the path of consensus, which has allowed for the significant progress just noted, in order to ensure that legislative, local and partial elections, set for the end of the year, will take place in proper conditions. Those elections were supposed to happen in November 2011 and, among other things, will allow for a real assessment of the progress of democracy in Haiti that has been made to date.

The security sector has always been one of the largest challenges in Haiti. While the situation has improved since the Haitian National Police and MINUSTAH launched operations that allowed for the disbanding of many criminal gangs, rates of homicide, kidnapping and other violent crimes continue to be high in the country. That situation has an adverse impact on the well-being of people, economic activities and the completion of donor projects.

In that regard, Togo would call upon the Haitian authorities to continue to bolster the operational capacity and modernization of the Haitian National Police and fight criminal gangs, which are the main source of insecurity in the country. We commend the courageous decision made last June by the Haitian authorities to put a stop to the illegal activities of members of the former armed forces.

However, managing crime and violence cannot be undertaken outside the bounds of the rule of law. It is therefore important to strengthen the rule of law by modernizing the legal and institutional framework linked to the security sector, expanding the police forces and the judiciary in the country as a whole, and making the protection of human rights a cardinal principle.

My country continues to be concerned by the human rights violations noted in the report, in particular of the rights of children who are victims of rape, abduction, trafficking and homicide. The Government must also take a firm stance against cases of excessively long preventive detention, inter alia, as well as prison living conditions.

One of the priorities announced by the Haitian Government is the recovery and reconstruction of the country. In that respect, Togo is pleased with achievements made in the last quarter in cleaning up the wreckage from the 2010 earthquake and in implementing return and relocation programmes, which have led to the closing of more than 22 camps and the rehousing of 5,000 families.

Nevertheless, we are concerned about the living conditions in the camps, where a high number of displaced persons live. Those conditions continue to worsen with the progressive withdrawal of humanitarian institutions due, inter alia, to the lack of funding. A full withdrawal of those organizations before a definitive solution is found for that humanitarian issue could create more health problems, such as those experienced by the country in the recent past. My country would therefore call upon the international community to help the Haitian authorities to resolve that issue by continuing its aid.

It is crucial for the Government and the people of Haiti themselves to tackle the challenges they are faced with. We are pleased to note the progress Haiti has made towards stabilization and development by bolstering its political institutions and the entities that guarantee the rule of law. We welcome those major advances, which are clearly noted in the report of the Secretary-General.

Nevertheless, in spite of those steps forward, Haiti continues to face significant challenges in its efforts to improve governance, stimulate growth, reduce poverty, manage crime and violence and address ever-growing prices of products for basic survival. All those matters are closely interlinked. It is clear that the current gaps in governance and the inability of the State to provide goods and services slow down economic development and impede poverty reduction, while poverty itself fuels crime. In that context, interventions must be made on many fronts in parallel. In addition, it is clear that, to tackle the those challenges, Haiti needs sustainable international aid, and the people and Government of the country will have to do their utmost to tackle them. My delegation would like to call upon the Government to unremittingly continue what it has undertaken along those lines.

Finally, given the many steps forward that have been taken, Togo understands and supports the plan to restructure and reorganize MINUSTAH's activities and its gradual withdrawal from the country.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I wish to welcome you, Mr. President, and to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Security Council today. That is of special significance, as you yourself said, Sir, because it is the first time that Guatemala is presiding over the Council. To you, Sir, and to Ambassador Rosenthal and to your entire delegation, we express our warmest and most affectionate greetings.

I wish to thank Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui for presenting the report of the Secretary-General, which includes many positive points and which also draws our attention, very objectively, to the situation (S/2012/678). The work of Mr. Fernández Amunátegui has been extraordinary. Those who have been able to visit Haiti in his company and to follow his guidance know just how difficult his task is and how much dedication and energy he has devoted to it. He has our full gratitude and support.

When we evaluate the progress made in Haiti, in order to make recommendations for promoting the well-being, development and strengthening of its institutions, there is a series of important elements we must consider. First, we must say that we are pleased with the stabilization process experienced in Haiti since the coming to power of President Martelly. That transformation, as seen in the report, has had specific effects. It was finally possible to confirm the Prime Minister in the Parliament, approve laws on the budget and on banking controls, reduce some types of crime, such as kidnapping and political violence, reduce the number of displacements, publish constitutional amendments, establish the Superior Council of the Judiciary, and comply with an important quota of 30 per cent women's representation in the Government. That generates confidence, and it shows that recovery is under way in Haiti.

We also wish to highlight the important role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in maintaining an environment of security and stability. That has been an important element in confronting the political, economic and social challenges in the best way. Matters such as the increase in murders, the carrying of firearms by unauthorized persons and the proliferation of criminal gangs require special attention in all sectors of the national police, with the support of MINUSTAH.

We believe that the strengthening of Haiti still calls for the presence of MINUSTAH, especially the essential component of its mandate, which is to provide conditions for security, well-being and the strengthening of institutions. That is all the more obvious when we note the conclusion of the Secretary-General in his report, when he states: "Although the performance of the national police has continued to improve, the institution is not yet in a position to assume full responsibility for the provision of internal security throughout the country" (*S/2012/678, para. 12*).

My delegation will support a resolution responding to those challenges and to the mandates that drive the activities of MINUSTAH, in which human security is perceived in comprehensive terms of promoting development, respect for human rights, peaceful coexistence and protection for individuals and their environment. That mandate must be interpreted in connection with the ongoing dialogue that should exist among the Government, civil society and international actors.

It is necessary to expand MINUSTAH's work to evaluate and strengthen the Haitian police. The plan for 2012-2016 developed by the National Police and MINUSTAH is an important tool to empower and increase the number of police, which today consists of 10,106 officers, sub-officers and agents.

With regard to engineering, MINUSTAH is conducting praiseworthy risk-management activities including building police stations, road repair, removing earthquake rubble and clearing rivers and canals of prefabricated structures. When it comes to criteria for reducing the military and police components proposed by the Secretary-General, we believe that the engineering unit should maintain a presence that matches the challenges in that area, in accordance with its capabilities. We call on MINUSTAH to assign the experts in that component as effectively as possible in a manner consistent with their abilities and areas of knowledge.

The presence of Colombian police in the field has been extended, as discussed at a working meeting on integral security for cooperation between Colombia and Haiti held in August 2012. A delegation of the Haitian National Police visited Colombia in order to implement the plan on cooperation in comprehensive security. The idea was to validate the proposal with the police authorities of Haiti, as well as the on-site presentation of the operative, administrative and human resources abilities of the Colombian police to train the beneficiaries of the programme. The goal is to train 221 police officers between now and 2014, as well as 50 female police officers, in order to strengthen strategic development and planning, and the environmental, anti-narcotics and anti-kidnapping police.

We consider that one of the fundamental aspects of the future of Haiti is the development of the agricultural sector, which, we believe, should be a priority. It is necessary to approve certain competitive factors, which this sector of national productivity offers in the context of a plan for rural and agricultural development. It will include the promotion of products of the earth such as coffee, cocoa, fruit, sugar cane and others. That could create an important source of exports.

I cannot fail to say that in accordance with our coffee business in Colombia and in association with the Inter-American Development Bank, we are promoting a project to improve coffee production in Haiti. The idea is to establish a sustainable, inclusive coffee chain of value, which will increase revenues for small producers, strengthen cooperative effort and increase exports of quality coffee. That is a project to which I devote particular attention.

Finally, it is important to mention projects for the recovery of communes and barrios and dwellings within an urbanization plan in Haiti, based on the experiences of the city of Medellín in Colombia and through strengthening the National Institute for Professional Training through technical exchanges with the National Training Service of Colombia, or SENA. Those entities have broad success in those sectors.

The political forces in Haiti must build on the progress achieved in order to open the path to take responsibility for their own destiny. No contribution makes any sense without such political will. Nobody except Haitians themselves can create that will. The efficient coordination of international cooperation continues to be a priority. Thus the adoption of an integrated strategic framework for help for 2013-2016, a strategic development plan of the Haitian Government, is a step in the right direction.

Responding to the cholera threat is a priority. The statistics in the Secretary-General's report call for that. The figure of 580,947 people infected between October 2010 and 15 July 2012 is not just worrisome. What is much worse is that at least 7,440 people have died because of this disease. A greater budget must be invested in preventing cholera and in water treatment, improving vigilance for and management of this serious problem, and supporting the most vulnerable communities.

International evidence shows that poverty and unemployment are causes of evils such as cholera, but so are institutional weaknesses that lead to malnutrition, illiteracy and corruption. All those scourges must be fought in a consistent fashion by developing the policies that Haitians will adopt, giving to the creation of local capacities and to institutional consolidation the primary place they should have.

Another fundamental issue is that of the postponed elections. We call on all local stakeholders to unite their efforts so that through constructive dialogue they can agree on prompt, transparent elections so that the 10 senators whose terms ended last 8 May can be replaced. Financial and administrative support in this sector is vital for strengthening the democratic process.

We are convinced that the United Nations has an institutional duty to Haiti, and the international community must support its management. MINUSTAH, as the appropriate mechanism for coordination and management, must maintain its presence in the field. That is why we commit ourselves to supporting the extension of itsr mandate to October 2013.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): Mr. President, South Africa congratulates the delegation of Guatemala on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the very first time. We are particularly pleased to see you, Mr. Caballeros, presiding over today's meeting.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing and report on the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) during the last six months (S/2012/678).

Haiti continues to make significant progress since its emergence from conflict and the devastating earthquake of January 2010. It is encouraging to note that during the current reporting period a number of significant political milestones were achieved. Those developments bode well for the strengthening of governance and the rule of law institutions. It is particularly impressive that with seven of the 22 cabinet positions filled by women, Haiti is setting an excellent example, and in very practical terms, of giving effect to resolution 1325 (2000) on the role of women in peace and security.

Those achievements are significant in the context of the many challenges that Haiti continues to face. It is important that we support Haiti in consolidating the gains made, especially in strengthening its institutions. My delegation remains concerned over the challenges preventing the formation of the Permanent Electoral Council, especially as this problem has delayed the long-awaited legislative, municipal and local elections. It is therefore urgent that the stakeholders engage in genuine dialogue in an effort to address the current challenges in completing the appoinments to the Council and that the elections be held as soon as possible.

We welcome the relatively stable security situation that has prevailed in Haiti during the reporting period. We note with satisfaction that the Haitian authorities, supported by MINUSTAH through its Operation Sunrise, have brought to an end the illicit activities of former members of the Haitian armed forces and young recruits, who had illegally occupied a number of sites throughout the country.

The strengthening and capacity-building of the Haitian National Police is critical in ensuring stability in Haiti and in laying a firm basis for the drawdown and larger withdrawal of MINUSTAH. My delegation therefore supports the efforts of MINUSTAH and the Government to increase the recruitment and training of police and to strengthen the capacities of rule of law institutions.

The Government of Haiti, like those of many countries around the world, faces the challenge of meeting the socioeconomic demands of its people. Those demands place tremendous pressure on the Government, which has to deal with the consequences of frustration, which manifests itself in social unrest. High levels of unemployment, the lack of service delivery and the difficult socioeconomic conditions will remain a threat to the stability of the State, as witnessed in recent incidents.

The link between security and development as two important pillars for ensuring the long-term stability of the country is clearly prevalent in Haiti. The Security Council has previously recalled the contribution that peacekeepers and peacekeeping missions have made to early peacebuilding, including through the creation of conducive environments that enable economic recovery and the provision of basic services. We therefore fully support the activities of MINUSTAH, and in particular its engineering component, in assisting the Government in constructing schools and hospitals and the installation of prefabricated units for the judiciary and other State institutions. Those aspects of MINUSTAH's work are conducive to the establishment of conditions for long-term reconstruction and recovery and support the notion of peacekeepers as early peacebuilders.

We recognize that Haiti continues to face major humanitarian challenges. The number of people who have died or who have been infected by cholera this year is alarming. We urge the Government of Haiti to strengthen its health capacity and its capability to effectively respond to the cholera and tuberculosis epidemics. It is also incumbent upon the international community to provide all the necessary assistance required to respond to the cholera challenge.

We welcome the development by MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team of the 2013-2016 strategic framework aligning its priorities with the Government's strategic development plan. While international support for Haiti remains crucial, we emphasize the need for national ownership and leadership. We note with concern, however, that less than 10 per cent of aid disbursed by the international community has been disbursed through the Government. We must avoid inadvertently creating parallel structures that could undermine the Government of Haiti. National ownership is essential to ensuring that the needs of the population are effectively addressed. South Africa therefore welcomes the announcement by the Government of the new aid coordination mechanism, which is aimed at aligning international assistance with national priorities.

South Africa pledges its support for the renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate and supports the proposal by the Secretary-General regarding the drawdown of MINUSTAH's military and police capabilities.

Such a drawdown should be gradual and conducted in consultation with the Haitian authorities, taking into account their needs and institutional capacity. We further urge MINUSTAH to calibrate the withdrawal of its engineering component with the needs on the ground.

In conclusion, Haiti has made significant strides towards peace and stability, and it is a testament to this progress that it has been entrusted by its region to take over the chair of the Caribbean Community. Challenges do remain, and it is imperative that Haitians, with the sustained support of the international community, work with MINUSTAH to overcome those obstacles.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): It is an honour to have you lead this meeting, Mr. President; many congratulations to you and to Guatemala on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the first time. Many thanks to the German delegation for everything it did during its presidency of the Council last month. Many thanks, too, to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing and for everything that he and everyone in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has been doing to implement the mandate we have given them in support of Haiti.

Seven months ago, when the Council debated MINUSTAH following our visit to Haiti (see S/PV.6732), inertia in the political system was blighting decision-making on all the issues central to the nation's development. Seven months on, several political milestones have been achieved, including the ratification of the Prime Minister and the installation of the Superior Council of the Judiciary. Haiti now has the opportunity to build on that progress.

Following our visit, we called for the Mission to begin planning, so that, when conditions on the ground allowed, it could begin drawdown. Now we see signs that those conditions are improving. For example, MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police have brought to a peaceful conclusion a potentially inflammatory demonstration by former members of the Haitian army. There has been a handover of security from MINUSTAH to the Haitian National Police in camps for internally displaced persons. And in four of ten regions, responsibility for security now rests with MINUSTAH's police units rather than with its troops. It is important that we note those successes.

We support the Secretary-General's proposals to reduce the number of uniformed personnel deployed with the Mission, but it is in no one's interest that MINUSTAH leave before the security it has established can be maintained by the Haitian authorities. Now more than ever, it is critical that the Mission undertake the planning needed for it to draw down without jeopardizing its hard-won security gains.

MINUSTAH's activities must be carefully prioritized. Building the capacity of the Haitian National Police — both operational and institutional — should be MINUSTAH's highest priority. I underline that we believe that that should not be a top but the top priority for MINUSTAH.

The Haitian National Police must also meet appropriate human rights standards, if it is to win the confidence of the Haitian people. Effective oversight, transparency and zero tolerance for corruption will all be important. Officers should expect the support of all political parties and a reasonable salary that is paid on time. Capacity-building in the justice sector, both regionally and at the institutional level, is also important to complement that activity.

Neither of those tasks is solely for MINUSTAH. Clarity is needed among all the actors involved as to what capacity the Haitian National Police and the justice system more broadly needs to build, and what the benchmarks and timetable will be for achieving those goals.

As long as political uncertainty remains the most likely trigger of instability, activity to support political stability must continue to be a priority. MINUSTAH should support the elections planned for the end of the year. The appointment of a Permanent Electoral Council is a crucial step and needs to be achieved quickly, if the partial Senate and local elections are to be held on schedule. It is vital that the Electoral Council be able to act independently and that it have the funding to do so.

However, that necessary prioritization inevitably means cutting back on some activities. The report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council focuses on the importance now of strong and coherent development support and the mobilizing of Haitian stakeholders, as well as the phased transfer of tasks from MINUSTAH to other actors. We agree: MINUSTAH should be handing over tasks where other actors, including the United Nations country team, have a comparative advantage in conducting them. Where possible, tasks should be handed over to national actors. Where that is not yet possible, all elements of the United Nations system need to work together to build national capacity. MINUSTAH should be adopting the most efficient configuration. It should be drawing on lessons from other missions. Decisions in that context should take into account the differences between geographic areas and the varying progress among sectors.

The United Kingdom believes that it is essential that peacekeepers conform to the highest standards of conduct at all times. We firmly support the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and we urge a rigorous and transparent approach to all allegations in that area.

In conclusion, MINUSTAH has achieved some encouraging results over the past 12 months. Looking forward, efforts now need to focus on utilizing the more favourable environment in which it is operating to deliver its core tasks.

It must engage other actors to share the burden where appropriate. MINUSTAH should be stopping activity which others are better able to conduct.

Mr. Zhukov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to join the other delegations that have congratulated you, Sir, and the Guatemalan delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the first time, and to wish you every success in your forthcoming tasks.

We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Fernández Amunátegui, for his briefing on the situation in Haiti. We read with interest the recent report (S/2012/678) on the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and agree with the conclusions contained therein.

Unfortunately, despite the progress made on the political front, the situation in Haiti continues to be most difficult. The political process remains fragile. The Permanent Electoral Council does not have wide support, and the legitimacy of the amendments made to the Constitution by the President is not recognized by all. That is the backdrop against which complex elections will take place in the Parliament and in local Government bodies.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, and there is some social unrest owing to social and economic instability, increased criminal activity and the inability of the national police to take on responsibility for providing internal security. The humanitarian situation remains difficult.

MINUSTAH without a doubt plays an important stabilizing role, and, along those lines, we believe that the issue of its drawdown must be taken up particularly carefully, taking into due account the possible consequences. We support the proposal of the Secretary-General that the reconfiguration of the Mission should be carried out on the basis of objectives agreed upon with the Government of Haiti, objectives that are clear and achievable over the next four or five years.

Moreover, we believe that the Mission should be gradually relieved of the duties that were entrusted to it after the earthquake, which include a wide variety of social, economic and humanitarian activities. In that connection, United Nations funds and programmes should participate actively in rebuilding the country, along with the United Nations peacebuilding machinery and donor support.

The Haitian Government must lay a leading role in resolving critical tasks in the country, first and foremost on the economic and humanitarian fronts. The Government bears particular responsibility for the effective utilization of international aid and must participate actively in its coordination.

One of most significant tasks facing the Government at this stage is the bolstering of police capacity. If the rule of law is not strengthened and national forces cannot ensure security, it will be difficult to speak of an authentic stabilization of the situation in Haiti. In that connection, we note the contribution made by MINUSTAH in attaining those ends.

The international aid provided to Haiti under the auspices of the United Nations has been an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity in its scale and scope. Without a doubt, efforts to provide comprehensive aid, including the strengthening of State institutions, should be continued so as to ensure that the Haitian people can independently resolve issues related to security, reconstruction and sustainable development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Cazeau (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and wishes you every success. We would like also to express our gratitude for the presentation of the report (S/2012/678) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We would also like to thank all the members of the Council and the Secretariat for their contributions.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Special Envoy, Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui and Mr. William J. Clinton, respectively, for their dedication, and the troop-contributing countries for their continued support. Along those lines, we would also like to commend the openness and expertise demonstrated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Edmond Mulet.

The report presented to the members of the Council focuses on salient aspects of the Government's activities that are priorities for it, given that it views the economic and social development process as indispensable to the stabilization of the country. Indeed, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Michel Joseph Martelly, presented, in the framework of his 5 "E's" formula, the pillars of his five-year plan: environment, energy, education, the rule of law and employment.

As is made clear in report, the past six months have been characterized by noteworthy political, legal and socio-economic achievements that have helped to stabilize the country. In May, the Parliament approved the appointment of Mr. Laurent Salvador Lamothe as Prime Minister.

During that same period, the Government was able to publish corrected constitutional amendments, finalize arrangements for the Superior Court, establish the Superior Council of the Judiciary and put forward the names of six of the nine persons who will make up the Permanent Electoral Council. It should be noted that the Superior Council of the Judiciary was created under laws adopted in 2007 that are in keeping with the spirit and the letter of the Constitution with respect to the independence of the judiciary.

The Superior Council, as set out in the Haitian Constitution, must be composed of nine members from the executive, the legislative and the judiciary, in equal numbers. However, given the very nature of democracy and the absence of 10 senators whose terms concluded on 12 May, the Parliament has not yet appointed its three representatives. To resolve the situation, the Government, the Parliament and other relevant actors have engaged in an inter-Haitian dialogue aimed at achieving consensus.

The initial actions taken by the Superior Council will include the holding of partial legislative elections so as to fill the Senate seats that have been vacant since 8 May. Preparations are moving ahead to ensure the success and the credibility of the forthcoming elections. The Government is grateful to the Secretary-General for having promised in his report the support of the United Nations for the electoral process.

The nomination on 15 August 2012 of Mr. Godson Orelus as Director General ad interim of the Haitian National Police (HNP), replacing Mario Andrésol, whose mandate had ended, is clear evidence of the Government's intention to ensure that the national police does not experience an institutional vacuum. The selection of Mr. Orelus, the former Director of the judicial police, was ratified by the Senate of the Republic.

The cholera epidemic remains a primary concern of the people and the Republic of Haiti. As noted by the Secretary-General, the number of cholera deaths is estimated by the Minister of Public Health and Population, at more than 7,440. The number of people affected by the epidemic is also worrisome. From the time the epidemic began, in October 2010, through July 2012, 580,947 cases were reported. During the seven-month period from January 2012 to August 2012, 35,000 additional cases were reported.

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the Government, with the assistance of United Nations agencies working in Haiti and many friendly countries, has taken measures that include the establishment of 16 treatment centres, 149 treatment units and 1,270 oral rehydration points. The Government has also ensured the distribution of chlorinated products to more than 2.2 million people.

In October, the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic will hold a meeting at the United Nations, jointly with the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization, on the issue of cholera.

In spite of the progress made thanks to the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations country team in support of the Government, much remains to be done at the humanitarian level to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable segments of the population. For example, following the earthquake of 2010, more than 1.5 million people were living in tents; today, that number totals less than 400,000. However, while that number has decreased by two thirds, many people, including children, women, pregnant women, newborn infants and elderly persons, are still living in tents.

The Government is also working tirelessly to create employment throughout the country, in particular through measures aimed at attracting foreign direct investment and reinvigorating the tourism sector. The Government is proud to announce the upcoming inauguration of the Caracol industrial park, which should create 60,000 jobs, and of the international airport in Cap-Haïtien.

The Government thanks the Secretary-General for having recognized the justified nature of its efforts to accelerate the development process in Haiti. It is grateful to him for having understood and clearly stated that, with respect to the incident wherein the Government expelled former members of the military, and persons claiming to be such members, from the sites that they were illegally occupying, the Government was combating a threat to public order.

The Haitian authorities are encouraged by the mention in the report of the National Police's capacity for intervention.

On another aspect, we would underscore that, more and more each day, the Government is seeking to impose respect for the country's laws. It does not claim to have achieved that to a satisfactory level yet, but it can commend itself on the fact that the situation is improving rather than sliding backwards. That is in part due to Government measures to strengthen public institutions and to promote a culture of the rule of law. The Government is listening to the people and is determined not to stop half way and to spare no effort in achieving consensus with all the country's stakeholders so as to support the stabilization and development process.

While a number of society's demands have still not been met, it is not because of the lack of political will but because the means are cruelly lacking. The Government is nevertheless striving to respond progressively to socioeconomic demands, including those of former soldiers rightly calling for severance pay, parents claiming a better life for their children and people living in tents demanding safe and secure housing.

Acknowledging that "Haiti is once again setting its sights on longer-term stabilization and development goals and has made important strides in strengthening its political and rule of law institutions" (*S/2012/678, para. 47*), the Secretary-General's report is very encouraging. It bolsters my Government's resolve to spare no effort to achieve the country's reconstruction and sustainable development goals.

The Government welcomes the consolidation plan for MINUSTAH, by which the military component of the United Nations structure gradually gives way to the police component until the Haitian National Police can replace it and can itself assume full responsibility for security in the country. As the report shows, that plan is already being implemented in four of the country's departments. The Government welcomes with satisfaction the Secretary-General's recommendation to the Security Council to reduce the military and police components of MUNISTAH from 7,340 to 6,270 troops and from 3,241 to 2,601 personnel, respectively, between now and June 2013. That measure also seeks to focus the police component more on the training of National Police officers than on operational activities and recognizes that the National Police have attained a certain maturity in action and intervention.

Finally, the Haitian people and Government would like to thank the Secretary-General for recognizing the progress made to date in expressing his confidence in the will and the ability of Haitian leaders to rebuild the Haitian nation and to ensure progress and sustainable socioeconomic development. That is possible only with the assistance of Haiti's partners, in the North and the South, and of international, regional and subregional bodies.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate Guatemala on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the first time, which is, as has been said, very auspicious. I also thank Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his presentation and to reiterate my Government's appreciation of his leadership and consistent support of political dialogue and the strengthening of democracy in Haiti.

(*spoke in English*)

The very fact that we can now consider the situation in Haiti with a more strategic and longer-term perspective testifies to the progress so far achieved. Two years ago, Haiti was grappling with the aftermath of a devastating tragedy. Although the challenge of alleviating the plight of the 400,000 people still living in tents remains, we must not forget that there were 1.5 million people on the streets just after the earthquake. That shows that real progress has been made. The removal of debris has progressed. Haiti and its international partners showed preparedness when tropical storm Isaac hit and lives were spared.

For the first time, a democratically elected Government from the opposition succeeded another democratically elected Government. The performance of the Haitian National Police has improved. Some key rule of law institutions have been established. We know, however, that the consolidation of such security and stability gains remains a challenge. Addressing that will require a sustained and strong commitment by Haitians themselves and our continued support. It will also demand that Haitian political actors seize all opportunities for dialogue and understanding.

Haiti is progressively consolidating a democratic foundation for its society after so many hardships, struggles and uncertainties. The active leadership of the Government and the inclusive participation of Haitian institutions are required. We encourage the earliest establishment of the Permanent Electoral Council as a result of a timely and negotiated solution that garners wide political support.

The upcoming partial legislative, local and municipal elections will constitute an important landmark. Credible and timely elections will send a powerful signal to the international community, potential investors and, above all, the Haitian population. We commend Haitian leaders for taking the reforms forward and setting up key rule of law institutions.

The improved conditions on the ground have allowed for adjustments in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). A lighter military presence should go hand in hand with the assumption of ever greater responsibilities by national institutions, especially the Haitian National Police.

Equally important, the consolidation plan for MINUSTAH must be mindful of the Government's priorities and must be truly owned by Haitians themselves. In addition, it must be coupled with a truly integrated strategy of the whole United Nations family in support of socioeconomic development and the strengthening of the Haitian State. Such an integrated strategy is essential for the sustainability of the considerable efforts made by Haitians in the past and their continuation in the years ahead, with the strong support of the international community.

As Haitian institutions consolidate further, it is essential that the Mission help the process by providing the indispensable support for them to adequately discharge their responsibilities. As we devise a strategy for the gradual, carefully planned and conditions-based military drawdown of MINUSTAH, we must ensure that the Mission is provided with the adequate tools, including quick-impact and community violence reduction projects and engineering resources, in order to continue to help secure a stable environment with concrete benefits for the population.

In line with the Mission's consolidation plan, Brazil is taking steps, in close coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the other troop-contributing countries, towards the partial withdrawal of one of our two battalions that were deployed as part of the post-earthquake surge. We see that as a measure of success of the efforts made by Haiti and the international community. We also see it as an expression of our shared confidence in the continued strengthening of the Haitian National Police. We will undertake the drawdown in constant dialogue with the Secretariat.

Full stability in Haiti requires major economic transformations. Job creation and income generation are still greatly needed. The stabilization gains facilitated by MINUSTAH will not be sustainable in the absence of improvements in the situation of the poorer and most vulnerable people. They constitute the large majority of the Haitian population.

Brazil has consistently underscored the importance of a strong and well-coordinated strategy, under the effective lead of the Haitian Government, so as to generate economic growth and reduce poverty. We welcome President Martelly's designation of five restructuring priorities for the country up to 2016, and his push for universal basic education in Haiti. We warmly welcome the development of a new aid coordination structure and, above all, the enhanced role of the Government in such a mechanism.

Brazil continues to rally behind the construction of the Artibonite 4C hydroelectric plant. The Brazilian army engineer corps has donated the construction project to the Haitian Government. Its completion will generate jobs and provide cheaper and cleaner energy, and it will open avenues for further investment and cooperation. In parallel, Brazil is proud to contribute to Haiti's health-care system through the construction of four health-care units in Haiti in partnership with Cuba.

Brazil's solidarity towards our fellow Haitians is long-standing, deep-rooted and unwavering. We will continue to stand by Haiti as it redoubles its efforts towards steady political stability, stronger institutions and more effective development partnerships. We see encouraging developments in all those areas. The determination and strength of the Haitian people are what make our optimism well founded.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by welcoming the presence of Mr. Harold Caballeros, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, among us this morning.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, which includes Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Guatemala, Peru, the United States of America and my country, Uruguay. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Guatemala, for organizing this debate to discuss the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/678) on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

The Group of Friends welcomes the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, and thanks him for his comprehensive briefing and for his efforts as the highest representative of the United Nations in Haiti.

The Group of Friends recognizes the important political and institutional achievements in Haiti since the previous report (S/2012/128), including the ratification by the Parliament of a new Prime Minister, the installation of the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the publication of the constitutional amendments, which includes, among other provisions, the establishment of a Permanent Electoral Council, of a Constitutional Council and a quota of 30 per cent representation by women in Government.

The effective establishment of the country's Permanent Electoral Council will constitute another major milestone in the process of consolidating democracy in Haiti, which is necessary for the timely, transparent, fair and credible holding of the overdue partial legislative, municipal and local elections. Haitian democracy will be strengthened by that achievement.

We call on all the relevant political stakeholders in Haiti to continue to work cooperatively towards the consolidation of democratic institutions and the rule of law and, above all, to meet the needs and aspirations of the Haitian people.

The Group of Friends notes that the overall security situation in Haiti remained relatively stable since the previous report. That has allowed MINUSTAH to continue to draw down its post-earthquake surge and to adapt its configuration without undermining the security and stability of Haiti. The Group also takes note of MINUSTAH's development of a conditions-based consolidation plan, and expresses its interest in closely following the plan's development and analyzing its eventual recommendations.

The Group of Friends welcomes the continued commitment by the Government of Haiti to strengthening the rule of law and to make further progress in reforming the security sector. In that regard, the Group would like to emphasize the critical role that the Haitian National Police (HNP) plays in Haiti's security and stability, as well as to underscore the importance of completing the ongoing strengthening, professionalization and reform of the Haitian National Police in order for it to assume full responsibility for Haiti's security. In that regard, the Group expresses its satisfaction with the establishment of the 2012-2016 Haitian National Police Development Plan, presented by MINUSTAH and the HNP.

The Group of Friends of Haiti recognizes the critical role of MINUSTAH in ensuring stability and security in Haiti and commends the Mission for continuing to assist the Government of Haiti to ensure a secure and stable environment.

The Group of Friends expresses its grave concern regarding the allegations of cases of serious misconduct by some MINUSTAH personnel, which have negatively affected public support for the Mission and may be undermining its work. The Group of Friends expects all United Nations personnel to adhere to the highest standards of conduct and urges all actors involved to assume their responsibilities in order to prevent such cases, investigate the allegations and hold accountable those responsible.

The Group acknowledges with satisfaction the important progress in the reduction of the number of internally displaced persons in Haiti. However, it would like to stress that Haiti continues to face significant humanitarian challenges, particularly with regard to women and children, including the more than 390,000 internally displaced persons who still depend on assistance for their basic survival, the ongoing cholera epidemic and the country's extreme vulnerability to natural disasters. The Group of Friends notes the continuing work by the Government of Haiti, MINUSTAH and others to protect vulnerable groups, but notes with equal concern the need to improve the response of the criminal justice sector to claims of rape and of serious crimes against children. We therefore urgently call for increased efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and children.

Those challenges remind us of the importance of sustaining cooperation between the international community and the Government of Haiti to meet the needs of the Haitian people. In that regard, the Group of Friends acknowledges the efforts of the donor community and calls upon them to fulfil without delay the pledges made. The Group welcomes the establishment of the aid coordination mechanism developed by the Government of Haiti, which succeeds the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission.

The Group of Friends of Haiti believes that security, development and stability are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We therefore stress the need to significantly address unemployment and the delivery of basic social services. At the same time, the Group stresses that there can be no genuine stability or sustainable development in Haiti without strengthening democratic institutions and a credible democratic process. In that context, the Group emphasizes the importance of promoting the rule of law through the strengthening of Haitian institutions and further reaffirms the responsibility of MINUSTAH to support the Haitian State in the areas of good governance, extending State authority and promoting and protecting human rights, in accordance with its mandate.

Finally, owing to the significant challenges that Haiti still faces and the critical support that MINUSTAH is providing, the Group of Friends of Haiti stresses the need to extend the mandate of MINUSTAH for one year to enable the Mission to continue to discharge its responsibilities according to the reconfiguration presented by the Secretary-General. In that regard, the Group has just submitted for the Council's consideration a new draft resolution regarding MINUSTAH's mandate and capacities.

The Group of Friends of Haiti would like to express its support and recognition to the women and men of MINUSTAH for their dedication and tireless efforts to support Haiti's recovery and stability. We wish the people of Haiti brighter days ahead. The Group of Friends is committed to that cause and will certainly continue its efforts to support their aspirations for improved welfare, working with the Permanent Mission of Haiti and the Haitian authorities to that end.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and the Guatemalan delegation for organizing today's debate on Haiti. I also congratulate you for presiding over the Council for the first time in your country's history.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

We congratulate all Guatemalans.

(*spoke in French*)

We also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernánez Amunátegui and our colleague, the Permanent Representative of Haiti, Ambassador Cazeau, for their statements.

This debate comes at the end of a period marked by a number of developments in Haiti that we see as clearly positive beginnings. The adoption of constitutional amendments, the creation of the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the adoption of a new development plan for the Haitian National Police are just a few examples. Those are steps in the right direction by the Government of Haiti. We hope that they will support Haiti's fledgling institutions while promoting their strengthening and independence, two factors essential to their effectiveness.

However, Canada remains concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the holding of senatorial and local elections. By encouraging a legitimate and credible Permanent Electoral Council to organize the elections, the Haitian Government has the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to and demonstrate its respect for democratic principles.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada's partnership with Haiti has lasted decades. Today, that partnership is at the heart of our engagement in the Americas, the purpose of which is to increase economic opportunities, strengthen security and institutions and establish long-term relationships. One of the specific objectives of our engagement is to effectively promote the rule of law, economic opportunity and sustainable development initiatives in Haiti, while at the same time tackling the underlying causes of the country's continuing insecurity.

Since 2006, Canada has provided Haiti with more than $1 billion in support. We have contributed to Haitian development priorities in a variety of areas, such as economic growth, food security and maternal and child health, as a result of Canada's Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. Canada has also provided substantial humanitarian assistance after natural disasters, to alleviate suffering and meet the immediate needs of all Haitians. In fact, individual Canadians generously donated $220 million to relief efforts after the devastating 2010 earthquake and our Government matched those donations.

In September, a Canadian trade mission to Haiti generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm among the investors who took part in it. We see that as a positive development, because we firmly believe that the private sector has an essential role to play in helping Haiti to continue its reconstruction efforts. Good governance being very important to investors, it is now up to the Haitian Government to continue its efforts to strengthen the rule of law and eliminate corruption, thereby creating the conditions that will enable Haiti's private sector and international investors to play their key role in Haiti's economic recovery.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada supports the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and looks forward to the upcoming adoption of the draft resolution to renew its mandate. We are pleased with the Secretary-General's recommendations, presented in his recent report (S/2012/678), to renew the Mission's mandate and to focus on adapting it so that it reflects the changing security environment in Haiti. The security situation has improved in the past few years, despite a recent increase in criminal activity and the occupation of former army bases by paramilitary groups last spring. We commend the successful intervention of the Haitian National Police, which was able to dislodge those groups with MINUSTAH's support.

I would like to commend MINUSTAH on its efforts to improve the security situation in Haiti, but it is even more vital that Haiti's security institutions become equipped themselves to play a greater role in defending the freedom and security of Haitians. Canada believes that the Haitian National Police must be the primary security force in Haiti. Along with other international partners, we continue to provide massive investments to strengthen the police against countervailing forces. However, Haitian authorities are the key actors in that effort. We are therefore pleased that the current Government has adopted the new police development plan for the 2012-2016 period. We hope that the Haitian authorities will make all efforts necessary for its implementation, and we will continue to monitor their performance as Canada considers its future investments.

In conclusion, steadfast political will is still needed to establish genuine rule of law in Haiti. Beyond some recent progress, Haiti's leaders must commit to actually delivering reforms that have been promised. Haitian men and women expect a Government in which the public interest is respected, the rule of law prevails, human rights are protected and the economy grows stronger through job creation across the country, and through the prosperity that trade and investment bring. Haiti's partners in Canada expect no less.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, please accept the congratulations of my country, Chile, on Guatemala's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. The Chilean delegation endorses the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti. The delegation also thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández Amunátegui for his briefing, and we commend him on his able leadership of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), even as we thank the men and women who staff the Mission for their work and dedication. Chile reiterates its support for the Mission and for the process of its consolidation.

We reiterate once again Chile's strong and continued commitment to the people of Haiti and their development, a commitment consistently proven since 2004. We agree with the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General on MINUSTAH (S/2012/678). We agree also that the time is ripe for the Haitian authorities to make progress in rebuilding their country and strengthening their institutions.

My delegation believes that full adherence to the rule of law remains essential to Haiti's security, stability, governability and economic and social progress. We hope that Haitians will be able to meet the challenges in the areas of justice, human rights, prison administration, gender-based violence and the protection of children.

During the visit to Haiti in May by the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, my delegation was able to witness on the ground the improved conditions in the country. Nevertheless, the Haitian people continue to face serious challenges that must be tackled by Haitian national institutions, with the support of the international community. The reduction in the number of internally displaced persons certainly represents progress, but we also note the many humanitarian challenges that remain. In that context, we are encouraged by the steps taken by the Haitian authorities, such as implementing the strategic development plan in order to connect local needs with international donors, and developing a new coordination framework, which will improve accountability between donors and beneficiaries of such assistance.

My delegation notes and commends the institutional progress made by the Haitian authorities in strengthening the rule of law. In addition to the swearing in of a new Government by the Parliament and the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary, we note the publication of amendments to Haiti's Constitution, the institution of the Permanent Electoral Council, which we hope will soon enjoy full membership, and the call for partial parliamentary and municipal elections before the end of 2012.

The holding of those elections would be a clear reflection of the required positive interaction between the three branches of Government. That interaction is essential for maintaining political stability and achieving development.

Chile is pleased with the progress made in the area of security and values the important role that MINUSTAH has played in stabilizing Haiti. Its work to support the activities of the Haitian National Police is crucial. It is to be expected that, in the medium term, the Haitian National Police will gradually be able to take over all security-related functions in accordance with what was established by the authorities in the development plan for the Haitian National Police for the period 2012-2016. My delegation believes it is essential for the Government of Haiti to strictly conform to that plan and to comply with the process of recruiting and training police officers stipulated for every year in order to have the appropriate number of police officers at the end of the period. For that purpose, we believe it is essential that the international community continue supporting the strengthening of the Haitian National Police. In that sense, the Government of Chile will continue with the bilateral cooperation plans for police training.

Chile supports the proposal to strengthen MINUSTAH presented in the report of the Secretary-General and hopes it will take place gradually and on the basis of conditions in the field. My delegation will continue to watch that process.

As we have said on previous occasions in the Council, security and development are two complementary concepts, which cannot be dealt with separately. For that reason, we believe that changes to the composition and size of the Mission should be compensated for by strengthening the presence of the development component through United Nations agencies in Haiti. In that regard, we support the implementation of the new integrated strategic framework for the period 2013-2016, as it strengthens the coordination between MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team in Haiti and aligns its priorities on the basis of the strategic plan for the development of Haiti drawn up by the Government.

We also recognize MINUSTAH's contribution to development through the quick-impact projects and the programmes to reduce community violence. For that reason, we believe that maintaining those programmes is essential. Those projects are crucial because they make it possible to increase the confidence of the local population in the Mission, especially in urban areas where institutions are weak and there are socioeconomic problems which can lead to social unrest. We also believe it is important for MINUSTAH to contiue taking measures to fight the cholera epidemic, together with local authorities, and to strengthen its zero-tolerance policy towards cases of sexual abuse and misconduct by some members of its personnel.

The Government of Chile believes it is necessary to continue cooperating with the development of institutional capacity in Haiti, under the principle of national ownership. Chile will continue to support that process through multilateral and bilateral channels. I conclude with an expression of my delegation's support for the extension of MINUSTAH's mandate, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report. We hope that the Security Council will accept those recommendations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Given that this is the first time that I am taking the floor under the presidency of Guatemala, I would like to first of all congratulate you, Mr. President, and wish you every success over the course of this month. I would also like to thank the German delegation and Ambassador Wittig for the work accomplished under the German presidency of the Security Council last month.

I shall take this opportunity to touch upon three priority topics: the political situation, security and MINUSTAH's role and development aid. We are pleased that since the appointment of a new Prime Minister, Mr. Laurent Salvador Lamothe, in May 2012, and the establishment of a new Government there has been a relative stabilization of the political context in Haiti.

We are also pleased that important headway has been made in moving forward democratic reforms, particularly with the entry into force of some amendments to the Constitution of 1987, the establishment of a Superior Council of the Judiciary and the establishment, even if it is still ongoing, of a permanent electoral council.

We call upon the Haitian Government to continue that path, in particular during the holding of the next elections. It is important that the obstacles which so far have impeded the full implementation of the permanent electoral council be resolved as swiftly as possible. A stable political context and a security situation that is under control are preconditions for supporting the reconstruction and economic recovery process. The European Union, in promoting development, continues its financial support and technical assistance to improve administrative capacities, including the ability of the State to promote and uphold human rights, as well as to advance reforms related to governance, security and strengthening the democratic system. Creating conditions conducive to foreign investment is a priority of the Haitian Government and would be another matter to deal with.

In spite of progress achieved by the Haitian authorities, among other things in enhancing the capacity of the Haitian National Police, we note that MINUSTAH's presence continues to be crucial in guaranteeing the security and stability in the country. The European Union and its member States welcome the proposals of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of the Mission and to reconfigure and progressively withdraw on the basis of stabilization benchmarks. That is a difficult and ambitious challenge but one that, in our view, can be achieved.

The withdrawal must go hand in hand with strengthening the Haitian National Police. It is also a matter of strengthening Haiti's State institutions, which must fully undertake the civilian duties that were part of MINUSTAH's mandate up until now, in particular the organizing and funding of the electoral process. The European Union is currently envisaging the possibility of implementing measures to support security sector reform in Haiti, with particular reference to the Haitian National Police. Moreover, establishing an integrated border management system for internal and external borders, recommended by the Haitian Administration, is also an area in which the European Union could provide assistance.

Over the past 12 months, the European Union has supported Haiti in its long-term rebuilding and development process. In that regard, 85 per cent of the €522 million pledged at the International Donors' Conference, held in New York in 2010, has already been disbursed. With regard to the rate of disbursal, we hope that over the next year the pace of expenditure will accelerate, thereby enabling us to honour by the end of 2013 the commitment we made in New York. Finally, we hail the efforts of the Haitian Government to implement a new mechanism for aid coordination, and we reiterate our willingness to participate in that endeavour. We hope that it will be an instrument that contributes to improving the effectiveness and transparency of aid management. We are also pleased with the progress made in implementing the strategic development framework for 2013-2015.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General's recommendations are part of a process of consolidating and stabilizing security and democracy in Haiti. A progressive handover of MINUSTAH's duties should contribute to that process.

The European Union and its member States remain fully committed to providing Haitian authorities with the support they need to achieve that goal. It also goes without saying that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General can also count on our full cooperation, and we thank him for the work he has done.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Román-Morey (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Guatemala's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the first time in its history, as well as for your initiative in convening this open debate on the situation in Haiti. Guatemala's presiding presence at this debate reflects its unshakable commitment to Haiti's situation, the only issue in the region on the Council's agenda. We also welcome the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui.

Haiti's security, stability, development and consolidation are particularly important to Peru. For that reason, my country has played an active part in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) since 2004, with a military contingent of 366 troops as well as officials at the Mission headquarters. Peru is also a participant in the Group of Friends of Haiti, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council, the Group of Friends of Haiti of the Organization of American States and the Latin American Political Coordination Mechanism for Haiti.

Peru is convinced that there can be no social and economic development that is sustainable over time without solid institutions that promote and sustain such development. We reaffirm the validity of the principle of national ownership, by which the Government of Haiti will lead the process of rebuilding its infrastructure, consolidating its national institutions, strengthening the rule of law, consolidating democracy and creating capacities. In that regard, we believe that the work of MINUSTAH continues to be essential to providing the Haitian authorities with the security and support needed to facilitate that process, in accordance with its established strategy and national priorities.

It is in that context that my delegation would like to draw the Council's attention to two aspects of the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/678) that Peru considers to be of primary importance: the first has to do with the need for continued support for the Haitian authorities in creating and strengthening solid public institutions, which will enable the country to respond effectively to the problems of security and development facing it; the second has to do with formulating a plan for reconfiguring and consolidating MINUSTAH, based on the new conditions in Haiti and the current needs of the Haitian people.

As was noted by previous speakers, the progress that the Government of Haiti has made in strengthening its democratic institutions and the rule of law is encouraging. In that regard, some of the important benchmarks are Parliament's ratification of the choice of Lauren Lamothe as Prime Minister, the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the publication of the constitutional amendments, which, among other things, establish a quota of not less than 30 per cent representation of women in the Government. We welcome that development.

In recognition of the democratic desires of the Haitian people, we call on all political forces in the country to help in speedily establishing the Permanent Electoral Council, the body responsible for ensuring that the next electoral proceedings will be conducted in a transparent, democratic and unhindered manner. In that connection, I would like to highlight the importance of the support of MINUSTAH and other regional bodies in the area of electoral assistance.

The progress MINUSTAH has made in stabilizing Haiti over the past few years makes it possible for us to contemplate the future with optimism, by which we believe that the time has come to begin a gradual, orderly process of transition to a second phase in the Organization's cooperation with Haiti. In that regard, we concur with the Secretary-General as to the importance of formulating a plan for reconfiguring and restructuring MINUSTAH so as to consolidate the achievements made in the area of stabilization. To that end, we believe that it is essential to have more and better coordination between MINUSTAH and the various agencies and programmes of the United Nations that have a presence on the ground. We also call on the various United Nations agencies and donors to channel their cooperation with Haiti through the new aid coordination mechanism recently approved by the Cabinet.

I would like to acknowledge the progress that has been made in organizing and strengthening the Haitian National Police, allowing it to take on a major role in the protection and security of its citizens, as was demonstrated by the recent transfer to the police of security functions in four regions of the country. We welcome the five-year development plan for the Haitian National Police for 2012-2016, which will enable the Haitian police to hire the officers necessary for it to maintain public order and security throughout the country in the near future, and to establish a solid institution based on promoting strengthening of the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Peru appeals to the international community to focus on the issue of the Haitian people's food and health problems. The improved stabilization must be accompanied by improvements in health care and proper nutrition for the people of Haiti, and the specialized agencies of the United Nations should devote special attention to those needs.

The significant achievements to date should not give us the false impression that the work in Haiti is over or even close to it. Experience has taught us the dire consequences for some countries when the Organization decides to withdraw its presence on the ground too early, and we trust that we will not make the same error this time. That is why my delegation would like to know what will become of the continuity of the important work we are doing together when the mandate of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fernández Amunátegui, who has done truly valuable work, comes to an end. We are sure that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will respond in a timely and effective manner to that important issue.

Finally, my delegation is of the view that the work in Haiti of the United Nations in general, and of MINUSTAH in particular, is far from over. For that reason, we trust that the Security Council will renew MINUSTAH's mandate and will continue its permanent support for building and strengthening solid national institutions with the goal of achieving a robust rule of law and a strengthening of Haiti's weak institutional capacities by first strengthening its human and material resources. That would require a focus on the three areas directly connected to the current process of recovery and reconstruction, namely, governance, security and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): I would like to express my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Harold Caballeros, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala, for presiding over this debate. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, for his comprehensive briefing this morning. And I would like to pay tribute to the men and women of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for their commitment and the fortitude they have demonstrated in difficult circumstances. I welcome the Secretary-General's report on MINUSTAH, issued on 31 August (S/2012/678). As the report mentions, MINUSTAH's personnel has shown continued dedication and commitment in support of Haiti's recovery and stability, and we commend them for that and for the concrete results they have achieved. Based on the situation in Haiti, we welcome the fact that MINUSTAH is refocusing its efforts on long-term stabilization and development.

The international community acknowledges and welcomes the progress that has been made in Haiti's recovery.

Since the earthquake in 2010, more than 10 million cubic metres of debris have been removed and the number of internally displaced persons has been reduced by more than 75 per cent. As the report of the Secretary-General points out, plans for the reconfiguration and consolidation of MINUSTAH warrant consideration.

Now that more than two and a half years have passed since the deadly earthquake, the necessity and significance of the Mission remain high, but the needs of the Haitian people have shifted. Haiti has made remarkable progress since Japan pledged $100 million for emergency relief and reconstruction for Haiti in 2010. In fact, Japan has already disbursed an amount exceeding its original pledge.

In recognition of such progress on the ground, the Government of Japan decided in July that it would start a wind-up phase of the operations of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's engineering unit in Haiti, with a view to its eventual departure from MINUSTAH. As Haiti is now entering the reconstruction phase, we believe that the country has reached a stage where our Self-Defense Force unit is becoming less needed. The number of personnel who have served in the Japanese contingent since its beginning now totals approximately 2,200. The contingent has made contributions to the recovery of Haiti through a variety of efforts, such as the removal of rubble, dismantling of damaged buildings, repair of facilities in camps for internally displaced persons, road repair, construction of orphanage facilities and water distribution in response to the cholera outbreak.

In spite of the progress made on the road to recovery, it is certain that Haiti will still be obliged to improve its basic infrastructure services with respect to roads, electricity and potable water, as well as social services, including access to education and medicine. High levels of unemployment and delinquency problems also exist. Many challenges remain for Haiti with respect to its recovery, reconstruction and development. International support will still be needed.

However, we acknowledge the fact that Haiti has been making serious efforts towards its reconstruction, and we are convinced that Haiti will do its utmost to achieve most of its recovery on its own. President Martelly has said he is making the five "E"s — education, employment, environment, establishment of the rule of law and energy — a priority.

We welcome the Haitian efforts to strengthen the rule of law and improve the security situation. Japan expects Haiti to continue its efforts, not only in those areas, but also in poverty reduction and in ensuring the welfare of all Haitian people. We further welcome the publication of a corrected version of the constitutional amendments and the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary. We urge all relevant political actors in Haiti to continue their dialogue and cooperation towards the establishment of a permanent electoral council. Japan expects the next election in Haiti to be carried out in a peaceful and democratic manner. It is our hope that the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Haiti will be further accelerated under the leadership of President Martelly and Prime Minister Lamothe, along with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, Mr. Harold Caballeros López.

Even after the withdrawal of its engineering unit, Japan intends to continue its support for Haiti. The Japan Self-Defense Force's engineering unit's contributions include human resource development for Haitian citizens through the sharing of expertise in the use of civil engineering equipment. In addition, we are now considering the possibility of donating such equipment to the Haitian Government.

The time has now come for us to shift from emergency support to long-lasting contributions. Through our efforts, including providing training the delivery of basic social services such as health, hygiene and education, we will continue to support Haiti's reconstruction and development.

As the Council is aware, more than one and a half years have passed since 11 March 2011, when the Great East Japan Earthquake struck our country. We are most grateful for the solidarity expressed to the Japanese people by the people of Haiti as we embark on similar endeavours. I am confident that both Haiti and Japan, in close collaboration with the international community, will overcome their difficulties through mutual encouragement and steadfast efforts to bring about a brighter future.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Guatemala on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the first time since it joined the United Nations. We would also like to express our pleasure at the fact that today's debate is taking place under the Guatemalan presidency, given the role that Guatemala has played in the stabilization of Haiti and in providing assistance to it over the years. The issue before us is one that brings all countries of Latin America and the Caribbean together.

I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Fernández Amunátegui, for his briefing and for the considerations he expressed, to which we fully subscribe. I also wish to note that Argentina fully supports the statement of Ambassador José Luis Cancela of Uruguay, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti. For that reason, I would like only to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

First of all, I wish to reiterate the firm commitment of Argentina to the institutional stability and development of Haiti, which has been ongoing for 18 years now and is expressed today in our continued participation in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and our bilateral technical cooperation with the Haitian Government. Like the Secretary-General in his report (S/2012/678), my delegation understands that MINUSTAH continues to be a decisive factor in establishing an environment of security and stability in Haiti on a permanent basis. As the Secretary-General recognizes in his report, the Haitian National Police is not yet in a position where it can take full responsibility for the safeguarding of internal security in the country. That is why my country supports the extension of the Mission's mandate for an additional year, as its presence is still needed by the Haitian Government.

Although we support the extension and although Argentina is aware that the political and social situation in Haiti continues to be complex, we wish to highlight the progress made in strengthening political institutions and the rule of law. We also salute the establishment by the Haitian Government of an aid coordination mechanism that will ensure its full participation in decision-making when it comes to the use of the funds and other issues having to do with cooperation projects in the country. We understand that the new mechanism will provide consistency and organization with respect to aid from the international community and facilitate the development of the institutional capacity of the Government itself to strengthen sustainable development within the framework of the strategic development plan.

In that sense, Argentina's understanding is that progress in stabilization must be accompanied by growth and development in the country on the basis of priorities established by the Haitian Government. For that purpose, it is important to strengthen the public-sector institutions so that efforts for development will be sustainable over time and so that the sector can provide the basic services needed, even when the United Nations is no longer present in the country.

Ambassador Fernández Amunátegui spoke eloquently about the challenges for development, particularly with regard to food security, that Haiti is facing and will continue to face over the coming years. We full share the views of the Special Representative, and we believe that the international community must give particular attention to those challenges in the coming years.

Argentina considers that it is necessary to further study the future of the Mission in order to prepare an orderly drawdown strategy that will respond to the interests of the authorities and the people of Haiti and to the situation of the country when it comes to security and its interrelationship with sustainable development.

We also understand that it is essential for Haiti to participate in decision-making on issues having to do with the peacekeeping operation deployed on its territory. We believe it is important for the Secretariat to periodically report to troop-contributing countries.

For Argentina, strengthening insitutional capacities of the Haitian Government must be an essential component for any drawdown strategy or any potential transition pact. Furthermore, Argentina believes that strengthening institutions, among other aspects in the administration of justice, the promotion and protection of human rights and economic and social development, is key to carrying out MINUSTAH's mandate.

Before concluding, my delegation has said on previous occasions at the Council that the goal of our work in Haiti is should be that the presence of the United

Nations and the international community is no longer be needed because Haitian authorities will be able to take responsibility for economic and social development owing to the strength of their own political institutions.

Finally, I would like to pay special tribute to the work accomplished by Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui in his capacity as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of MINUSTAH. At the time of his appointment, Argentina warmly welcomed the Secretary-General's decision. As he nears the end of his tenure, I wish to express, on behalf the Government of Argentina, our recognition for his work and that of his team, and especially for all the efforts they made over the years. We believe that Ambassador Fernández Amunátegui has represented us in an exemplary fashion, and we are certain that he will conclude his term with the great satisfaction of having done his duty and reached the objectives set for him at the beginning of his work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr.Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a true honour for me to have the opportunity to participate in this meeting of the Security Council, presided over by Guatemala for the first time in history.

I would like to associate myself with the statement made by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union, and I wish to add the following considerations on behalf of my delegation.

Spain continues to be firmly committed to supporting the effort of the Government and the people of Haiti in the work of rebuilding the country following the 2010 earthquake. That is demonstrated by the fact that Spain is the third largest bilateral donor to Haiti. To date, we have disbursed $225 million, 65 per cent of the $346 million committed at the New York Haiti Donors' Conference of 2010. That amount was devoted, as a priority among other commitments and in agreement with the Government of Haiti, to projects in the water and sanitation, education, rural development and food production sectors, as well as in the fight against hunger, of course.

I wish to highlight Spain's contribution to the cooperation fund for water and sanitation, with a total investment of more than $150 million, which will potentially benefit 6.5 million citizens, or 70 per cent of the country's population. In the business sector, working with the Inter-American Development Bank, Spain in finalizing the implementation of a specific fund for promoting small — and medium-sized businesses. In addition, the President of the Government of Spain, Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, proposed to President Michel Joseph Martelly, here in New York last week, that Spain would facilitate deploying to Haiti a mission of Spanish businesspeople to explore new forms of cooperation with the private sector. Spain has also participated in the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission and the Haiti Reconstruction Fund, donating$20 million to the latter. Following the end of the Commission's mandate, in October 2011, Spain has supported the Haitian Government's proposal to designate the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation as the counterpart of the Haiti Reconstruction Fund. We believe that is the best way of directly encouraging ownership and capacity-building in the Haitian administration.

We are pleased with the progress that has taken place in the Haitian political situation since the previous debate in the Chamber, in March (see S/PV.6732). Signs of stability after the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Mr. Laurent Salvador Lamothe, and the formation of the bodies provided for in the 1987 Constitution are very good news. It is our hope that the Haitian Government will also be able to make progress in constituting the Permanent Electoral Council, such that in the electoral processes to be held in 2013, the Council will be able to take over the functions assigned to it by the Constitution.

On the matter of security, Spain reiterates its commitment to strengthening the Haitian National Police. The objective is for the police to gradually take over its responsibilities for public order, and for Haiti to take over the responsibility for its own security. In the meantime, Spain believes that the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti' continues to be essential. We therefore support the recommendation to renew its mandate.

Finally, I wish to add my voice to those who welcomed the new aid coordination mechanism presented by Prime Minister Lamothe on 26 September here in New York during the ministerial meeting held under the slogan "Haiti Partners". The motto for Spanish cooperation in Haiti has always been "Everything for Haiti, but with Haiti". Spain is therefore prepared to participate in the new mechanism, the objective of which is to increase the effectiveness and transparency of assistance, reduce overlaps and make it possible for Haitian authorities to take greater ownership of the process. We hope that the mechanism, along with the progress made towards a more stable political environment, will make it possible to increase disbursements of development assistance.

Finally, I wish to thank Ambassador Fernández Amunátegui for the work he has done.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mrs. Morgan (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I first wish to thank the delegation of Guatemala for having organized the debate on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Allow me to express my thanks to Guatemala for presiding over the Security Council this month.

I also wish to acknowledge the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, who has given us a very comprehensive view of what is happening on the ground. We also appreciate the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/678), which we are studying. We agaree that the conditions for political stabilization in Haiti have been making progress. That would not have taken place without MINUSTAH's valuable contribution to improving the security situation in the country and to promoting political dialogue.

We take note of the process of the peaceful transition of power, as well as the recent publication of constitutional reforms to establish the Permanent Electoral Council. Those are significant steps towards strengthening democratic life in Haiti. We also welcome the launching of a development plan that is intended to attact foreign investment, help combat corruption and smuggling, and promote industrial projects as the basis for the country's sustainable development. However, we acknowldege that there are still challenges to which we should respond and that it is essential for MINUSTAH to have the necessary resources to respond to them. We must continue supporting the strengthening of security institutions, especially the Haitian National Police, which still does not have the ability to take full responsibility for internal security in Haiti.

Therefore a MINUSTAH troop and police presence continues to be necessary, in terms of both coverage and training.

It is likewise important that the Haitian Government, with the support of the international community and of countries in the region in particular, continue with its efforts to fight unemployment and poverty in Haiti, which have a direct impact on the living conditions of the Haitian people.

The international aid coordination mechanism announced by the Haitian authorities during the general debate of the General Assembly some days ago will contribute to ensuring that such aid is channelled towards meeting the priorities identified by the Haitian Government.

It is true that if those efforts fail, Haiti will continue to suffer conditions which promote instability and which could worsen due to its vulnerability to natural disasters.

Mexico is firmly committed to efforts aimed at promoting stability and sustainable development in Haiti. We therefore support the renewal of the mandate of MINUSTAH for another year and its reconfiguration. We firmly believe that the men and women deployed in Haiti will continue working in close cooperation with the Haitian Government to lay the foundations of a prosperous and peaceful Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Ms. Lalama (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to see Guatemala assume the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank your country, Sir, for having organized this meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), a matter of great importance in our region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

My delegation welcomes the presence of Ambassador Mariano Fernández Amunátegui and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General for his wise choice in appointing him his Special Representative for Haiti and for the efforts he has made to build a better future for this sister nation.

Ecuador's commitment to the stabilization process in Haiti is well known. Therefore, since the beginning of the Haitian crisis in 2004, we have been participating actively in MINUSTAH, in keeping with the central principle of our foreign relations to provide unwavering support in humanitarian crisis situations and seek to resolve conflicts.

It is worth underscoring that my country does not merely contribute troops to peacekeeping operations; we have implemented a series of measures and actions which together form a comprehensive policy, including, for example, Ecuador's peacekeeping school, where soldiers are trained to tackle problems faced by internally displaced persons and refugees, and to respond to humanitarian disasters, as well as prepared to resolve conflicts with civilians.

I take this opportunity to recall that following the earthquake of January 2010, my country, under the auspices of the Union of South American Nations, cooperated directly with the Government of Haiti in rebuilding roads, bridges and access routes in the Artibonite area, which allowed farmers to bring their produce to cities, thus contributing to the development of food security in the most important producing area of Haiti and thereby to the country's sustainable development.

Ecuador welcomes the progress made, which has improved conditions in Haiti. These include the ratification by the Senate of the new Prime Minister and the publication of the corrected constitutional amendments which had been awaited since June 2011. Likewise, the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary is another step forward in the work of the Haitian Government in strengthening institutions essential to the rule of law and thereby human rights.

However, Ecuador is concerned to see that the process of the establishment of Haiti's first Permanent Electoral Commission is plagued by controversy between political parties in Parliament and civil society, who have questioned the integrity of the Council and its ability to organize credible elections, which has led a number of lawmakers to favour the establishment of a provisional electoral council.

In this regard, my country hopes that all stakeholders will participate in a constructive dialogue with a view to holding credible elections without further delay and thereby contribute to revitalizing Haitian institutions and minimizing the institutional vacuum created by the expiration on 8 May of the mandate of 10 senators.

Ecuador commends the progress made in extending State authority, including over border control and in strengthened security. However, we note that violence continues to be concentrated in major urban areas, signalling that the National Police continues to face challenges when it comes to fully assuming its responsibility for safety in the country. In this context, MINUSTAH's social and military components play an essential role in maintaining security and stability in general.

In conclusion, Ecuador supports the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his latest report (S/2012/678) to extend the MINUSTAH mandate for a further year. Haiti undeniably continues to be threatened by food insecurity, growing poverty and a fragile humanitarian situation. My Government hopes that measures can be devised to optimize coordination and joint efforts by the Group of Friends of Haiti, donor countries, and the authorities and the Government of Haiti in order to achieve the badly needed social, political and economic stability that the people of Haiti demand and deserve.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now give the floor to Mr. Fernández Amunátegui to respond to the comments made.

Mr. Fernández Amunátegui (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express my most sincere thanks to the Guatemalan presidency for having organized this meeting, espeecially as this is the first time that that country has assumed the presidency of the Security Council since the United Nations was founded. I think that this is a very important moment for us.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the unanimous support for the recommendation of the Secretary-General, his report (S/2012/678) and the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for a further year. I would also like to express my deepest thanks for the support expressed for the work of MINUSTAH. I believe that the men and women of the Mission richly deserve such support, and it was delivered most eloquently.

Lastly, I wish to express my personal thanks to the international community. In today's debate, we have noted how institutional and political progress is leading to greater stability in Haiti. That progress has truly been due to the unified voice and action of the international community, especially the permanent diplomatic presences in Haiti, but also the missions that have visited and the diplomats and embassies represented here. There has never been a single dissenting voice in our efforts to politically stabilize Haiti. Quite the contrary: we have always had very active agreement, which has been felt by the Government, public opinion, the opposition, Parliament and civil society. This concord has made an extraordinary contribution to continued progress. I cannot say that no progress would have been achieved without it, but I believe that the difficulties would have been much greater and the progress much more minimal. Therefore, I wish to thank and congratulate the international community on behalf of MINUSTAH for the outstanding work we have been able to achieve.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

United Nations

S/PV.6843

Provisional

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

6843rd meeting

Tuesday, 9 October 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Rosenthal	(Guatemala)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Madureira
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. MacNaughtan
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Afghanistan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2012/742, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Germany.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/703, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/749, which contains a letter dated 9 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Azerbaijan, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2069 (2012).

I shall now give the floor to members who would like to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Togo welcomes the adoption of resolution 2069 (2012), through which the Council has decided to extend to 13 October 2013 the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force. We would like to thank the other Council members, in particular Germany, for the efforts undertaken to that end. At the same time, while joining the consensus, my delegation would like to explain its vote on two items.

First, Togo would like to have noted its reservations with respect to the part of the eighteenth preambular paragraph that stipulates:

(*spoke in English*)

> "and remaining concerned at the serious harm that opium cultivation, production and trafficking and consumption continue to cause to the security, development and governance of Afghanistan as well as to the region and beyond".

(*spoke in French*)

The reference to "as well as to the region and beyond", without any other geographical limitations, would seem to generalize the impact of drugs in Afghanistan as beyond the region and without limits. Clearly, Togo, like other Council members, is very sensitive to the issue of drugs worldwide in general and in Afghanistan in particular. The open debate that was held on 21 February under the presidency of Togo (see S/PV.6717) was illustrative of that concern.

We believe that while this phenomenon affects Afghanistan's neighbours and States beyond the region, we have had no indication to date that the impact of drugs from Afghanistan extends to all regions of the world. We should therefore have defined the geographic extent of the phenomenon.

Secondly, my delegation fully understands the rationale beyond the resort to the concept of agreed language as a solution to ending the stalemate in the negotiations. We nevertheless believe that the agreed language should not be systematically used in circumstances that differ from those for which it had previously been adopted.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations **S/PV.6844**

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6844th meeting

Tuesday, 9 October 2012, 10.25 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Rosenthal	(Guatemala)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Ms. Guo Xiaomei
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Eick
	India	Mr. Ahamed
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Karev
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

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Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Sierra Leone to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the members of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Mrs. Ebun Jusu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and Ms. Brenda Hollis, Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, to participate in this meeting.

I should like to acknowledge the presence in the Council Chamber of Ms. Binta Mansaray, Registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and Ms. Claire Carlton-Hanciles, Principal Defender of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

I extend the warmest welcome to the four representatives of the Court.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Justice Fisher.

Mrs. Fisher: On behalf of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, I thank the Council for this opportunity to address members on the achievements of the Special Court and the upcoming completion of our mandate. We are especially privileged to be speaking during the presidency of Guatemala, a nation that shares with us a commitment to fighting impunity and to striving for gender justice.

We are also very pleased to address the Council on the twelfth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). The Special Court of Sierra Leone is a living example of the progress of the resolution. For the first time in the history of international tribunals, all four principals — the President, the Prosecutor, the Registrar and the Principal Defender — are women. We owe a special thanks to UN-Women, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice and the United Nations Development Programme, first, because of their tireless efforts in advancing the goals of resolution 1325 (2000). On a more personal level, we thank them for financing our journey here, without which we could not appear before the Council today.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone will soon complete its final case. We will deliver the final judgement in the appellate proceedings in the case of Mr. Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia. That final judgement will determine Mr. Taylor's guilt or innocence. The Court will then transition to residual status and close its doors. It will be the first international criminal tribunal to do so.

I could say that the Special Court has delivered on its mandate, that it has contributed to ending impunity and that it has brought justice to the people of Sierra Leone. I could say that but I think that it is more important that members hear it from the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia themselves.

At the end of May, with funding from the European Union, an independent nationwide survey was conducted in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It was designed to measure the impact and legacy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Some 79.16 per cent, that is, almost 80 per cent, of the people surveyed believe that the Special Court had accomplished its mandate.

The document rightly attributes such results to the vision established during the early stages of the Court of it being an institution embedded in and responsive to the expectations and needs of the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia.

For that, credit and thanks are owed to the Registrar, Ms. Binta Mansaray, whose vision it was to take the Court to the people and who designed an outreach programme that was both geographically and demographically inclusive and participatory.

When questioned on what that mandate entailed, the people surveyed expressed their understanding that it was to prosecute those with the greatest responsibility for the war from all factions, without regard for the side on which they fought or the power of the position they held. For that, credit and thanks are owed to the Prosecutor, Ms. Brenda Hollis, and her predecessors.

But the people surveyed also indicated that they believed the mandate was to bring justice and the rule of law to their war-torn part of the world. It cannot be forgotten that faith in the outcome of those cases depends on faith in the process — that it be fair, that the rights of the accused be respected and that they be zealously represented. For that, credit and thanks are owed to the Principal Defender, Ms. Claire Carlton-Hanciles, and the dedicated defence teams she oversees.

Most heartening and humbling is the fact that the survey found that 91 per cent of people in Sierra Leone and 78 per cent of people in Liberia believe that the Special Court has contributed to bringing peace to their countries. The Court that the United Nations established and has supported for the past 10 years has been judged by 91 per cent of the people surveyed to have contributed to bringing peace to Sierra Leone. For that, credit and thanks are owed to the Security Council. The Special Court's successes are truly the Council's. Celebrating the success of the Special Court is celebrating the Council's steadfast commitment to the work of the Court. On behalf of the Special Court, the four Principals would like to thank the Council, the States Members of the United Nations and the international community as a whole for their enduring support and assistance over the past decade. We congratulate them on their vision and dedication, and we encourage them to recognize the immensity of our joint achievement.

Because of that vision, the Special Court for Sierra Leone is the first of its kind. It is the first partnership between national authorities and the United Nations to create a credible system of post-conflict justice that meets international standards. It is the first hybrid tribunal created to assist a State that desired post-conflict justice but did not have sufficient capacity to ensure it. It is the first United Nations-sponsored tribunal to carry out its work in the territory where serious violations of international humanitarian law were committed, thereby ensuring that the survivors of conflict are participants in justice, and not mere bystanders to it.

And it has been successful. That success is not only an accomplishment for the present, but an important one for the future as well, because it is a proven model for positive complementarity. As the Special Court's success proves, complementarity is a reality, not just an aspiration. My colleagues and I, the four Principals of the Court, are visible evidence of that reality. We are two Sierra Leoneans and two internationals united in our commitment to post-conflict justice. What is special about the Special Court is the synergy of local commitment, knowledge and talent with international financial and human resources. Complementarity works.

The Special Court's example should dispel doubts that positive complementarity can succeed in difficult environments. It must be remembered that the Court came about because the Government of Sierra Leone had the courage and innovation to request a partnership with the international community at a time when the situation in Sierra Leone continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region. The conflict had destroyed national legal and judicial institutions, and Sierra Leone alone did not have the human and financial resources to realize its desire for justice.

Confronted with challenges, the Special Court innovated. Faced with isolated communities, a multiplicity of languages and limited communications infrastructure, the Special Court's outreach programme innovated. Under the leadership of Registrar Mansaray, a Sierra Leonean who knows her country and its people, it literally took the Court to the people. Traveling over roads that were no more than trails, outreach workers crisscrossed the country again and again with the latest video summaries of the actual trials, in mobile units consisting of video players and a generator they carried with them.

When, from the first, the unique concerns and experiences of women and girl survivors of the war were recognized, as were the personal and cultural barriers to participation in the justice process, the Court innovated. Gender-sensitive approaches to witness support and outreach were developed in partnership with local women's organizations and resources. Accommodations were made by judges in the courtroom to encourage women's voices to be heard. Those voices have been reflected in the jurisprudence of the Court, which was the first to recognize forced marriage as a crime against humanity and sexual violence as a form of terrorism.

Other jurisprudential firsts have been truly remarkable. The Special Court was the first to develop jurisprudence on the recruitment and use of child soldiers — jurisprudence that was used and acknowledged by the International Criminal Court in its first trial judgment in the case of *The Prosecutor vs. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*. The Special Court was the first to rule on the effect of national amnesties in international law, on the issues of immunity involving sitting Heads of State, and on a matter close to the hearts of those in this Chamber — the crime of attacks on peacekeepers.

On front after front, the Special Court has developed not only jurisprudence but also tools, practices and programmes to address the specific needs of a post-conflict society. The Special Court stands ready to share the knowledge and expertise it has gained. We invite Member States to draw on the Court's work and to utilize its programmes as part of their own national strategies.

We must keep in mind how fragile our accomplishment will be if we fail to keep faith with the people of the region who put their trust in the Council and the Court. Our responsibility to those people will not cease. It must be taken up and advanced by the Residual Special Court of Sierra Leone.

Residual responsibilities are not an afterthought or burden. Ensuring the protection of witnesses who appeared before the Special Court encourages more people to come forward and to be witnesses in other courts involved in fighting impunity. Failing to ensure their protection will guarantee the opposite result. Preserving the archives ensures that the work of the Special Court remains an accessible, unequivocal record of the war. Failing to preserve them invites revisionist history and denial of the suffering endured by Sierra Leone's people. Supervising the enforcement of sentences ensures that the Special Court continues to lead by example in protecting the human rights and dignity of all people, as demanded by the rule of law. Failure to provide that oversight erodes our reputation as a just institution and undermines the moral authority of all our work.

The Residual Special Court will face particular challenges in obtaining voluntary contributions to fund its operations. The support of the Security Council will be essential to ensuring that it can carry out its important responsibilities.

On behalf of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, we once again extend our sincere thanks to the Security Council, the States Members of the United Nations and the international community as a whole for their enduring support and assistance. And we congratulate them on that accomplishment.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Hollis.

Ms. Hollis: I echo the comments made by President Fisher and thank the Council for its decision to convene this briefing on the Special Court for Sierra Leone. As the Prosecutor of the Special Court, I am honoured to be given this opportunity to brief the Council. I will focus my remarks on the achievements of the Special Court and on those of the Office of the Prosecutor in particular. I will also discuss some of the challenges faced by the Office of the Prosecutor, our responses to those challenges and certain challenges the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone may face.

I turn first to the achievements of the Special Court. President Fisher has mentioned some of its many successes. In my view, the principal achievement of the Court, and its most important legacy, will be the fulfilment of our mandate to prosecute those who bear the greatest responsibility for the horrific crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone. All the members of the Office of the Prosecutor, past and present, can be proud of their significant contribution to that accomplishment. The achievements of the Special Court are the product of the hard work and dedication of all the organs and members of the Special Court, who are to be commended for their untiring efforts. With the Council's permission, I will limit my comments to the achievements of the Office of the Prosecutor.

The Office of the Prosecutor has acted expeditiously. We commenced operations in mid-2002 and presented the first indictments in March 2003. Guided by the Special Court's statute, we focused our efforts on prosecuting those who bear the greatest responsibility. Consequently, we presented 13 indictments, charging senior leaders of the three main factions in the Sierra Leone conflict and Charles Taylor, the then President of Liberia. The first trials began in 2004. With the exception of the case against Mr. Taylor, all cases were completed through appeal by October 2009. Unfortunately, it was not until 2006 that Mr. Taylor was surrendered to the Special Court, three years after he was indicted.

The Office of the Prosecutor expeditiously and effectively prosecuted Mr. Taylor. We amended the indictment against him, reducing the charges in order to present the case more speedily. We presented evidence that resulted in Mr. Taylor's conviction on all charges, a result noted by the Security Council in resolution 2065 (2012). This is the first conviction of a former Head of State by an international criminal tribunal since the Nuremberg trials in 1946. On the basis of that verdict, Mr. Taylor was sentenced to 50 years' imprisonment.

Mr. Taylor was convicted of the charges for two reasons. First, he was convicted of planning the attacks that culminated in the January 1999 invasion of Freetown and the mass crimes that resulted from those attacks. Secondly, he was convicted of aiding and abetting members of the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council in the commission of the charged crimes. Both the Office of the Prosecutor and Mr. Taylor have appealed the judgement and the sentence.

We are proud of our other achievements as well. The Office of the Prosecutor has been an active participant in the Special Court's excellent outreach programme, which has been widely commended for its effectiveness. Through the programme we have succeeded in engaging the people of Sierra Leone in a judicial process carried out in their name, and have fostered a two-way conversation between the Prosecutor and the affected communities.

The Office of the Prosecutor has also contributed significantly to international jurisprudence. We were the first to charge and prosecute the crimes of enlistment, recruitment and use of child soldiers, attacks on peacekeepers and forced marriage as a crime against humanity. The resulting jurisprudence can be relied on by other international as well as national courts.

Many deserve credit for the Special Court's achievements, and I would like to express my gratitude to them. They include, in particular, the people of Sierra Leone, whose demand for justice — the Council will recall — resulted in the creation of the Court; the Security Council, which, through resolution 1315 (2000) and subsequent others, responded to that demand; the Secretary-General, whose work advanced the creation of the Special Court and whose continued support strengthened it; very importantly, the victims, survivors and those members of the perpetrator groups who showed the courage and commitment needed to give information and to testify, both for the prosecution and the defence; the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, for their continuing commitment to the Court and the support they have provided; the Member States that have faithfully served on the Special Court Management Committee; the 51 States, the United Nations, the European Commission and other organizations that have provided funding and other support for the Special Court; and civil society organizations in Sierra Leone, Liberia and worldwide, for their commitment to justice and support for the Court.

Particular mention must be made of the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone as partners in establishing the Special Court. Together they created a statute that achieved two important goals. First, as I have already discussed, the statute, appropriately, focused our efforts on those who bear the greatest responsibility. Secondly, the statute ensured that the Special Court would build on the strong foundation put in place by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, both as to substantive and procedural law. The Special Court has indeed built on that foundation in carrying out its mandate. I encourage all tribunals and courts that have followed to build on that expanded foundation.

As President Fisher has stated, the Special Court has faced numerous challenges during its decade of operation. I will now highlight some of those challenges relating to the Office of the Prosecutor. The record will show that we have responded positively to them in ways that may be relevant for other courts and tribunals. Of the most demanding challenges before us, I would like to address three: indictment, staffing and witness issues.

I will first address indictments. Charges are determined, first and foremost, by the evidence before a prosecutor. As with other prosecutors faced with a multitude of crimes committed across a wide chronological period and geographic area, we had the task of developing indictments that balanced two goals: first, arriving at a true reflection of the nature and scale of the crimes to which an accused could be linked and the full extent of his criminal conduct, and, secondly, bringing charges that could be expeditiously proved. To achieve that balance, we focused our indictments on representative crimes and on the scope of the criminal conduct of each accused person.

I now turn to staffing challenges. The Office of the Prosecutor had the task of recruiting a sufficient number of staff to fulfil our exacting mandate and with retaining enough experienced staff to maintain the continuity of our work. Those challenges were amplified by the uncertain nature of voluntary funding. We responded by using short-term contracts whenever possible, giving us flexibility in meeting our needs; by reducing permanent posts in an orderly manner as we reached prosecution milestones; and by relying heavily on experienced, talented professionals seconded to us by States. Those secondments proved to be an effective and financially desirable option. For example, we could not have conducted our investigations without the local knowledge and expertise of Sierra Leonean investigators loaned to us by the host Government.

I will now address witness issues. Of course, without witnesses, no trials would be possible. Our main challenges were to communicate and meet with some 800 potential witnesses in a safe environment and, in cooperation with the Registry's Witness and Victims

Section, to ensure the security before, during and after the trial, of the more than 300 prosecution witnesses who testified. We have relied extensively on investigators seconded from the Sierra Leone police to enable us to contact our witnesses in a manner that protected their security. We have also had regular contact with our witnesses before and after trial, ensuring that we receive timely alerts of any security risk or harassment. Allow me to emphasize that the security of witnesses and the enforcement of witness protection orders were and remain significant challenges. For example, in their testimony, many witnesses named individuals who had committed horrific crimes; those witnesses continue to live among the individuals named and their supporters.

I now turn to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone. Some of the challenges it may face can be anticipated today. The Residual Special Court plans to have a relatively small footprint. That is a positive response to the challenge of balancing the requirements of its mandate with efficiency and financial stability. Such efficiency may be enhanced by sharing an administrative platform with other courts. As already emphasized, ensuring the security of witnesses and the enforcement of witness protection orders will be a continuing and significant challenge. Indicative of that challenge, this year, the Special Court has convicted five individuals of contempt for interfering with witnesses; those convictions are, of course, subject to appeal. As made clear by article 18 of its statute, the Residual Special Court shall be responsible for ensuring the security of witnesses and those put at risk by witness testimony. It shall also be responsible for the enforcement of the protection orders of the Special Court and any put in place by the Residual Special Court.

In order to fulfil that mandate, it is critical that the Residual Court will have the resources necessary to protect witnesses and ensure that people who came forward, often at the risk of their well-being, will continue to receive the protection of the Court they have so well served.

I wish again to thank the Security Council for this opportunity to brief its members about the Special Court. In preparing my briefing, I was reminded of resolution 1315 (2000). The prudence of that resolution has been made clear to me every time I engage the people of Sierra Leone. I thank the Council for its wisdom, including in adopting that resolution, and for its support for the Special Court.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Prosecutor Hollis, for her briefing. I now give the floor to Mrs. Ebun Jusu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone.

Mrs. Jusu (Sierra Leone): At the outset, allow me, as I take the floor for the first time, to congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and to wish him full success during his tenure. I would also ask that he accept our thanks and appreciation for the inclusion of a briefing on the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the Security Council's programme of work. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his unwavering support for the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and for backing the efforts undertaken by the Court to carry out its mandate.

We commend the President of the Court and the Prosecutor for their comprehensive briefings to the Council on the Court's operations during the period under review, and also for the Court's unremitting efforts in implementing its mandate in accordance with resolution 1315 (2000), adopted on 14 August 2000, including the Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone, signed on 16 January 2002. Accordingly, we welcome the new completion strategy adopted by the Court's management committee and wish to underscore the various challenges outlined in the strategy, in particular the perennial funding gap for the completion of the Court's mandate and its residual tasks.

The Special Court represents an effective partnership between the Government and the people of Sierra Leone and the United Nations for the purposes of promoting justice and fighting impunity for heinous crimes committed in Sierra Leone during the civil war. As the first hybrid tribunal created to assist a State in addressing impunity for crimes against humanity, the Special Court has made unprecedented contributions to gender justice and has laid the foundation in international criminal jurisprudence for designating acts of forced marriage, sexual violence, sexual slavery and the recruitment and use of child soldiers during the conflict as punishable crimes. It has also successfully established that wanton attacks on United Nations peacekeepers are proscribed and that perpetrators are liable to be prosecuted. Furthermore, the Special Court's jurisprudence underscores the importance of understanding gender-related traumas from the point of view of those who experienced them, as well as the importance of understanding suffering within local cultural contexts. It has also made critical contributions to national reconciliation efforts and to the restoration and maintenance of international peace and security in the subregion.

Taking into consideration what I have just said, one cannot gainsay that the Special Court has successfully delivered on the goals set for it by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. Indeed, that tribunal has proven to be equal to the task as evidenced by its landmark judgements and contributions to the rule of law at both the national and the international levels and as an important adjunct to our peacebuilding initiatives.

Despite those special and compelling accolades, it is a matter of common knowledge that the Court continues to face significant funding gaps that endanger the completion of its judicial mandate and its residual mechanism. We wish to express much appreciation and gratitude for Member States' support for the Court in the form of voluntary contributions and for the life-saving subsidies from the United Nations, as well as to underscore the need for the United Nations and the international community to continue to support the Special Court so that it can complete its good work.

Needless to say, the successful completion of the Court's mandate would send a powerful message that the international community strongly supports institutions established to hold accountable those responsible for war crimes and, in so doing, would deter or minimize the incidence of the perpetration of such atrocities in the future. We therefore count on Member States and the international community to continue to support the Court so that it can complete its work and help facilitate its effective transition to the Residual Special Court immediately upon completion.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone underscores the importance of the Special Court in fighting impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, and in contributing to peace and stability in Sierra Leone and the subregion.

Some notable and recognizable milestones attained by the courts so far would include victory for hundreds of former child soldiers and adoptees, who had the letters "R-U-F" carved or engraved with a hot iron on their back and chest to prevent them from escaping. It would be a victory for victims of sexual violence and a victory for human rights and democracy. However, the victory, so greatly acclaimed, will be incomplete if the want of adequate resources and financial impediments deter the tribunal from fairly and fully completing its mandate and its residual task to their logical conclusions. We therefore count on the Council to spare no effort to avoid such an undesirable scenario and to launch appropriate mechanisms to provide the much needed relief and assistance to the Court for its continued survival.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Minister Jusu for her statement.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Ahamed (India): Let me begin by thanking the Guatemalan delegation for organizing today's briefing on the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Having started my career as an advocate, the topic under discussion is of special interest to me. I would also like to thank the President of the Special Court, The Honourable Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, for presenting the report on the activities and achievements of the Court since the last briefing to the Security Council on 16 July 2009 (see S/PV.6163).

The Special Court was established in 2000 by resolution 1315 (2000) at the request of the Government of Sierra Leone. Since its establishment, the Court has successfully carried out its mandate set out in the Statute of the Court. Three of the four main cases have been completed, and the last case is in the final stages of judgement in the Appeals Chamber.

Keeping in view its track record, we hope that the Special Court will successfully accomplish its mandate by 30 December 2013, when the Appeals Chamber is expected to give its verdict in the Charles Taylor case. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to assist States, upon their request, in restoring peace and stability, including through the fight against impunity.

The enforcement of sentences with the assistance of the Government of Rwanda is a good example of international cooperation in furthering the cause of justice. We have also taken note of the Special Court's outreach activities, witness protection efforts and archive development programme, including through capacity-building initiatives that will strengthen national judicial institutions in Sierra Leone. We also appreciate the creation of a Peace Museum, which will contribute to the efforts aimed at national reconciliation in the country.

As the Special Court prepares for closure, focusing on residual issues such as the enforcement of sentences, the protection of witnesses and the preservation of archives of the Special Court assume great importance. In that regard, there is a need for continued support to the Special Court as well as to the Residual Special Court.

India has a long history of a cordial relationship with Sierra Leone. India played a major role in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone until 2001. Since then, India has continued to partner with the Government of Sierra Leone in its reconstruction efforts. India has extended loans and credit lines worth $94.45 million over the past few years to enable Sierra Leone to procure agricultural equipment and to modernize and expand its national telecommunications network, SierraTel. Our partnership has included the restoration and rehabilitation of six potable water and solar street lighting projects. As part of our bilateral cooperation programme, India is providing 45 training slots to Sierra Leone this year. India has also offered to set up an India-Africa information and communication technology centre in Sierra Leone.

Before I conclude, I would like to convey our best wishes to the Government and people of Sierra Leone as they prepare for national elections next month. The successful conduct of the elections will be a major milestone in post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, which should help in the process of national reconciliation and the further consolidation of democracy in the country. India remains committed to continuing its partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone, particularly in capacity-building and human resources development.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): In September 2000, with the adoption of resolution 1315 (2000), the Council demonstrated its commitment to the fight against impunity and the restoration of peace and security in Sierra Leone. Given its deep concern that serious violations of international humanitarian law had been committed in Sierra Leone, the Council was determined to bring those responsible to account, in accordance with international standards of justice, fairness and due process of law.

The Council requested the Secretary-General to work with the Government of Sierra Leone to establish an independent special court to prosecute those persons bearing the greatest responsibility for the commission of those crimes, including those leaders who threatened the peace process in Sierra Leone. Today, as we have heard from the President and the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, that vital task is almost complete. The United Kingdom congratulates the Special Court for its significant achievements. And we would like to thank the President of the Court and the Prosecutor for their briefings.

We are also grateful to Guatemala for convening this meeting during its presidency of the Council. Like Guatemala, the United Kingdom believes that it is important and timely to take stock of the progress made by the Special Court — to acknowledge how much it has achieved and to better understand the tasks that remain.

The United Kingdom looks forward to September 2013, when the Special Court is due to become the first modern war crimes tribunal to successfully complete its mandate. We do not underestimate the complexity and significance of the appellate proceedings in the case against Charles Taylor. The United Kingdom strongly believes that the completion of the trial of Charles Taylor by the Special Court was a landmark for international justice.

As the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom at the time said, the trial proceedings played an important role in helping the people of Sierra Leone come to terms with the past and consolidate national reconciliation. It is heartening to hear from the President of the Special Court that the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia feel so strongly that the Special Court has contributed to bringing peace to their countries. The Special Court's prosecution of Charles Taylor sends a strong message that the international community will not allow serious crimes to be committed with impunity. It signals that the reach of international justice is long and patient.

Since its inception in 2002, the United Kingdom has been a leading supporter of the Special Court.

United Kingdom funding has reached approximately $44 million and accounts for some 20 per cent of the Court's voluntary contributions to date. That includes a contribution of almost $1 million in March. We reaffirm our commitment to imprisoning Charles Taylor in the United Kingdom if the Appeals Chamber upholds his conviction and if the President asks us to do so.

Our support for the Special Court will remain strong long after the Taylor appeal and the high-profile work of the Special Court has come to an end. But the achievements of the Special Court do not begin and end with Charles Taylor in The Hague. The United Kingdom commends the Special Court in Freetown for successfully completing three important trials of eight former rebel leaders and conducting five contempt proceedings. Furthermore, the Special Court's invaluable role in building the capacity of the Sierra Leonean legal system will certainly be a lasting legacy, as will the Court's vital outreach programmes, which have made its work accessible to many people in Sierra Leone and Liberia, contributing to reconciliation and raising awareness on important issues such as child soldiers and sexual violence in armed conflict. We welcome the way in which the Court has developed gender-sensitive approaches to witness support and outreach in partnership with local women's organizations and resources.

But the United Kingdom cannot fail to acknowledge the Special Court's serious and challenging financial circumstances. Funding shortfalls risk the completion of appellate proceedings in the Taylor case. Funds are needed urgently. Longer term, the Residual Special Court requires secure and sustainable funding in order to continue to protect witnesses, manage the detention of those convicted, and protect the archives. The United Kingdom is considering all funding options for the Special Court and the Residual Special Court, and we urge other members of the Council, and indeed all Member States, to do so as well.

The United Kingdom applauds the Special Court for its groundbreaking achievements. We remain ready to support the Court as its completes its mandate in order to sure that it's legacy is preserved.

Mr. Eick (Germany): I thank the Guatemalan presidency for having organized this briefing with representatives of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We are also very grateful for the presentations made today by the Court's President and Prosecutor. I would like to take this opportunity to commend them once again for their work and for the Court's achievements. I would also like to thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone for her statement.

I would like to make the following points. First, Germany recognizes the invaluable contribution of the Special Court to the rule of law, ending impunity and maintaining peace and security in Sierra Leone and beyond. By trying those accused of the most horrendous war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone, the Court has brought some justice to the victims of those crimes, and it continues to stand out as a testament to the determination and capacity of States to prosecute international crimes in partnership with the United Nations.

The Court has undertaken major capacity-building initiatives aimed at rebuilding the criminal justice system of Sierra Leone. I would also like to express our appreciation for the important outreach activities undertaken to inform the people of Liberia and Sierra Leone of the Court's work.

Secondly, the Court has made legal history on many accounts. Both its Statute and jurisprudence have recognized the need to address gender-based crimes, including forced marriage, and have thus transformed the commitment contained in resolution 1325 (2000) into practice. The Court has set a precedent for prosecuting the crimes of enlisting, recruiting and using child soldiers, and has thereby shaped international law in this area, not least by providing important references for the recent conviction of Thomas Lubanga by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Most important, the indictment, trial and conviction of Charles Taylor represent a landmark in criminal proceedings against a head of State. Together with the conviction of Thomas Lubanga by the ICC and of those responsible for atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, respectively, the Taylor case has made clear that the age of accountability has in fact begun.

Thirdly, the work of the Court is not yet complete. The appeals process in the Taylor case needs to be concluded, and several contempt proceedings against individuals who have threatened witnesses are pending before the Court.

At the same time, the Court is preparing its transition into a residual mechanism, with the target date of 30 September 2013. We look forward to the conclusion of the relevant agreements between the United Nations and Sierra Leone.

This briefing is a welcome opportunity to highlight the Council's appreciation of, and full support for, the Special Court. The draft presidential statement to be read out later today does just that.

Germany has made significant financial contributions to the Court's budget, as well as for witness protection and legal experts programmes. In addition, we have been actively engaged in ensuring the United Nations subvention granted to the Court in 2010.

As we are aware of the Court's present dire financial situation, Germany supports further efforts to find practical solutions in order to ensure the successful completion of the Court's work.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, and the Prosecutor, Ms. Brenda Hollis, for their briefings. We also thank Her Excellency Mrs. Ebun Jusu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, for her statement. We welcome the report of the Special Court, which was shared with the Council.

Let me reiterate Pakistan's complete support for the important work of the United Nations-established special courts and tribunals. We commend their work in promoting accountability and fighting impunity in the particular situations of relevance.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established, pursuant to resolution 1315 (2000), to prosecute persons responsible for the horrific crimes committed during the conflict in Sierra Leone. As the Court approaches the conclusion of its mandate, it deserves recognition for its work in addressing the most painful chapter in the history of Sierra Leone. The Court has dealt well with the crimes within its jurisdiction. The outreach activities of the Court should help facilitate national reconciliation. Programmes and activities for strengthening the national legal and criminal justice system in Sierra Leone is another important contribution of the Court.

As the Court winds up its activities, there are still important areas of work that need to be brought to a conclusion. Most important is the completion of the appellate proceedings with regard to Mr. Charles Taylor. We take note of the work under way for transferring the long-term aspects of the Court's mandate to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, including the enforcement of sentences, witness protection, the management of archives and the trials of those still at large. We urge all concerned stakeholders to cooperate in this endeavour.

I would like to conclude by commending the President, Prosecutor and other members of the Special Court for their efforts and achievements.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank the President and the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for their very informative briefings on the achievements of the Court, its ongoing work and progress in the completion strategy of the Court and on the establishment of the Residual Special Court.

I also thank the Minister from Sierra Leone for her briefing.

We welcome the fact that the Special Court for Sierra Leone has been able to overcome at least two features that could have been considered as defects that would generate doubt regarding its ability to execute its mandate satisfactorily.

First, there were the uncertainties related to the financing of a hybrid or internationalized jurisdiction based on an agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is therefore unlike the two ad hoc tribunals, namely, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) — which are subsidiary bodies to the Security Council and thus benefit from guaranteed United Nations financing.

Secondly, it was also the first time that such a jurisdiction had been located in the territory of a country that was the theatre of the acts that were to be the subject of prosecution, where the socio-political trauma and resentment risked generating insecurity and compromising the country's position in terms of proper implementation of the mandate.

Despite those features that were part of its creation, there is remarkable proof today that the Special Court has contributed to strengthened stability in Sierra Leone and in the West African subregion, while working to put an end to the culture of impunity.

It is also recognized that the Court has fostered unexpected progress in the area of international criminal justice and notable enrichment of international criminal law. In that connection, Togo welcomes the work of the Special Court, which has enable it to bring to conclusion numerous key trials, among which we would include the trial of Charles Taylor, which is currently on appeal and is slated for completion on 30 September 2013.

It goes without saying that elements of jurisprudence from the Special Court will continue to contribute to enriching debates aimed at promoting progress in international judicial systems, both nationally and internationally, in areas including forced marriage as a crime against humanity and sexual violence in times of war and terrorism, among others.

My delegation also welcomes the fact that the Special Court has been able to tackle one of the major challenges facing jurisdictions of its nature, in reaching an agreement with the Government of Rwanda to ensure the execution of sentences handed down to those convicted.

Moreover, my country's delegation believes that the commitments made by the Special Court to ensure the lasting effect of its achievements in the fight against impunity, through the conservation of its archives, as well as awareness-raising and dissemination of its results, are notable signs of progress.

In particular, Togo would like to support the idea of preserving memory on the part of the Special Court, which it pursues under its mandate by creating museums and mausoleums in order to shape and fix images that are aimed at informing the collective awareness so that those acts are never committed again. However, given the fact that imagery can sometimes surprise, and therefore produce results opposite to those anticipated, my delegation hopes that the Court will be able to take steps to accompany those images with the teaching activities necessary to quell perverse effects that could — contrary to our desire - inspire and incite repeated atrocities.

As in the case of the two ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the Special Court's completion strategy should not in any way open doors to hasty trials or impunity. We welcome the fact that the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is to continue after it has closed, through the implementation of the mandate of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, to fight against impunity and bring to account those who are still fugitives from the law, ensuring the execution of sentences and promoting the protection of witnesses. It is therefore important that the Special Court work relentlessly to respect the timetables and forecasts for the completion strategy and for the closing of the cases that are still pending.

My delegation remains convinced that the Special Court's success has been made possible partly thanks to active cooperation among States, and that that cooperation is also crucial not merely at the current critical phase as the mandate draws to a close, but also as the Court seeks to ensure the launching and success of the Residual Special Court.

That is why Togo calls upon all States to continue to cooperate with the Special Court in contributing to its budget, on the one hand, and, on the other, to extend equal support with regard to cooperation and financial support to the Residual Special Court.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): Allow me to thank Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and Ms. Brenda Hollis, Prosecutor of the Special Court for their comprehensive briefings on the current status of the work of the Special Court. We also appreciate the perspectives put forward by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone.

The fight against impunity remains an important building block for an international community free of conflict and violence. Long-lasting peace must therefore include the establishment of the rule of law and the promotion of justice.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone should be commended for the positive role it has played in strengthening stability in Sierra Leone and the wider subregion. The Court is an example of how the fight against impunity can be promoted by international cooperation between situation countries and the international community.

South Africa pays tribute to the Court for its sterling work in the fight against impunity and in particular, for the fact that it remains on track to complete its substantive work by September 2013. Three major cases have already been completed up to the appeals phase, while the trial judgement has been delivered in the final case of the Prosecutor, namely, the case of Charles Taylor, which is now in its appellate phase.

As highlighted by both the President and the Prosecutor of the Court, the contribution and achievement of the Special Court in setting jurisprudence precedent will have a lasting impact on our collective efforts to ensure accountability and establish rule of law.

We are also pleased to note the smooth implementation of the prisoner transfer agreement with Rwanda.

We commend the Special Court for its efforts to reach out to affected communities. The outreach to victims of sexual and gender-based crimes is particularly welcome, given that women, girls and children often carry a heavy burden of conflict. The outreach activities are critical in ensuring the reintegration of societies and breaking the circle of violence.

That the outreach work has been successful is borne out by the approval figures produced in the recent surveys on Sierra Leone and Liberia. As the report before the Council notes, the Court is a model of positive complementarity. That is a principle that South Africa strongly advocates.

My delegation wishes to reiterate what the President of the Court has said. The Special Court shows that complementarity is a reality, not simply an aspiration, and that it works.

We have taken note of the preparations for the winding down of the Court, including the signing and ratification of the Agreement on the Establishment of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone and the minimal functions it is expected to perform. We are particularly pleased that the agreement provides for assets of the Special Court to be transferred to Sierra Leone.

We hope that the lasting legacy of the Court will not only be the accountability of those responsible for egregious crimes, but also national reconciliation and sustainable peace, not only in Sierra Leone but throughout the region and our continent. We are confident that the Peace Museum will contribute to that very important objective.

The Special Court has made an important contribution to the cause of international justice. In that regard, it is be vital for the international community to continue its support for the work of the Special Court until the completion of its mandate.

Mr. Karev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Prosecutor and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone for their briefings on activities.

Today's briefings have been of particular importance in summing up the essence of the work of the Special Court.

The Special Court is scheduled to close on 30 September 2013, after which date a small residual mechanism will be launched. International judiciairy mechanisms already have experience in transitioning to a mode of residual jurisdiction. As the Council knows, the Rwandan office of the Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia opened in July.

Taking into account the effective work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in terms of phasing out its activities, we hope that it will be able to avoid the problems that other courts have encountered. We note the rapid pace with which the Special Court has conducted its proceedings, including the most recent case, that is, Charles Taylor's. The report provides particularly indicative information to the effect that the Appeals Chamber never exceeded the time allotted to it for its cases. That is a good example for those courts that constantly violate the timetables for proceedings while saying that it is ostensibly impossible to accurately predict the time needed for their trial activities.

Overall, the outcome of the work of the Special Court should be evaluated positively. It has made a considerable contribution to the development of international criminal justice. In being the first such hybrid court, including both international and national elements, and having been established in a post-conflict phase, it has contributed to strengthening the rule of law at both the international and the national levels.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to first welcome the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, the Prosectuor, Ms. Brenda Hollis, and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Ebun Jusu. The briefings that they have given us today give a clear indication of the important work and mission that the Special Court for Sierra Leone has completed.

This is also a good opportunity to reiterate the firm support of the members of the Security Council for the Special Court and to express our appreciation and recognition for all that has been accomplished and for all of the progress that has been made. Of course, among those results is one that we would consider most visible, namely, the prosecution and sentencing of Charles Taylor. That represents a true watershed in the area of prosecuting individual criminals under international law. The Special Court has made an extremely important contribution to developing international criminal justice. It has also had a positive impact in both Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In that respect, we believe that the activities aimed at disseminating and promoting the Court's work have been essential, as they are the best way to ensure a direct positive effect on the rule of law and governance in those countries and the region.

Lastly, I would like to underscore that the Special Court has also been very active in implementing its completion strategy. In that connection, we welcome the signing of an agreement between the United

Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone regarding the establishment of a Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone. We call upon States and international organizations that are in a position to provide financial support for the implementation of that instrument to do so. Of course, without that support, the completion strategy will encounter serious obstacles.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the Guatemalan presidency of the Council for convening this meeting to hear a briefing on the current status of the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the completion of its mandate. We are grateful to the President of the Special Court, The Honourable Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, and the Prosecutor, Ms. Brenda Hollis for their presentations. I would also like to welcome Her Excellency Mrs. Ebun Jusu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone to the Council.

Azerbaijan commends the Special Court for its efforts to end impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law, thus contributing to national reconciliation and the restoration and maintenance of peace in Sierra Leone and the region and advancing the rule of law in the country. We agree with the report's assessment that the Special Court has achieved unprecedented success in delivering on the ambitious goals set for it by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. Indeed, the establishment of the Special Court was the first partnership between national authorities and the United Nations to create a credible system of post-conflict justice that met international standards of justice. It was the first hyrbid tribunal created to assist a State that desired post-conflict justice, and it was the first tribunal to carry out its work in the territory where serious violations of international humanitarian law had been committed.

The Special Court's constribution to the development of the jurisprudence of international criminal law particular to the law of war crimes and crimes against humanity can obviously benefit other national efforts to pursue post-conflict justice, especially in those situations where the prevailing culture of impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community represents a considerable obstacle to peace and reconciliation.

We take note of the Special Court's approach to victims, especially children and women who suffered from displacement, recruitment as soldiers, sexual abuse and other crimes. We also note the Special Court's contribution to gender justice and commend the development of a special programme for the protection of women victims. I would also like to commend the Government of Sierra Leone for the cooperation and assistance it rendered to the Special Court during the course of its operation.

While encouraged by the commitment of the Special Court to complete its remaining work as expeditiously and efficiently as possible, and to ensure a smooth and successful transition of responsibilities to the Residual Special Court, the Security Council, Member States and the international community should continue to support the Court during the final phase of its work. In the same spirit, it is important to extend to the Residual Special Court the international community's encouragement and financial assistance.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and its Prosecutor for having shared with us their assessments of the work and the record of the Special Court, as well as for having expressed to us here their passion for the noble mission that they were entrusted with. I would also like to welcome the participation of Her Excellency Mrs. Ebun Jusu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for Sierra Leone, and to reiterate to her Morocco's commitment to supporting that friendly country in its efforts to consolidate peace and to transition towards stability and development.

We welcome the achievements of the Court since it was launched in 2002. The Security Council had an opportunity to express its satisfaction last April following the verdict of the Special Court in the trial of Mr. Taylor. The Council underscored the importance of that ruling for the victims of the crimes committed in Sierra Leone during the conflict as they awaited the final verdict, which is scheduled to be issued shortly.

That highly symbolic verdict was preceded by the completion of two other cases involving the heads of the Civil Defence Forces and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. But beyond those specific cases, we continue to believe that the importance of the Special Court for Sierra Leone transcends the goal of the completion of its trials. The Court contributed to the process of consolidating peace in Sierra Leone and in the subregion and to the efforts made to restore the rule of law and end impunity. As a result of its work and the outcomes achieved, the Court represents an innovative model of mixed international justice that is based on complementarity and national ownership. For all of those reasons, we endorse the draft presidential statement that is before the Council.

We noted with satisfaction the efforts undertaken and the progress achieved by the Special Court with respect to implementing its completion strategy and preparing for a transition towards a residual special court immediately following the completion of its mandate, by 30 September 2013. While commending the agreement on the issue between the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, we deem it important to maintain the same level of political support and ensure that it has sufficient resources, so that it can meet the many challenges inherent in this critical stage of the process, in particular the protection of witnesses, the enforcement of sentences, the preservation of archives, the protection of its physical and legal legacy, and the creation and the building of the capacities of the local judicial system.

It is indisputable that one of the major successes of the Special Court lies in its ability to involve all of the actors of Sierra Leonean society and in its outreach and awareness-raising efforts aimed not only at the general public in Sierra Leone but also at neighbouring countries. We welcome the fact that those activities will continue in the context of programmes involving the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Nations and local actors, including with respect to setting up a peace museum to preserve the collective memory.

The progress made on the path to peace, justice and reconciliation by the people of Sierra Leone is all to the credit of that brotherly country, which has taken ownership of its own destiny with the support of the international community. We were able to see that directly during the recent visit of the Security Council to West Africa. In this phase of critical transformations, it is important that the international community stand mobilized for Sierra Leone so as to help it overcome its challenges in terms of strengthening democratic institutions and promoting economic development.

My country, Morocco, which has supported the brotherly people of Sierra Leone in the various phases of its ending the crisis, continues to stand ready to assist our brothers in order definitely to close this chapter of years of conflict and enable it to continue to move towards stability and prosperity.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to thank Ms. Fisher, President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the Prosecutor of the Court for their briefings, and, more generally, the entire Special Court team for the job that they have done. I also welcome the presence here and the statement made by Mrs. Ebun Jusu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone.

France endorses the presidential statement drafted by the United Kingdom to commend the work of the Court.

The seriousness of the crimes perpetrated during the civil war called for a response commensurate with the gravity of the violations committed. That is why France has provided, since the inception of the Court in 2002, its full political support for the actions of this criminal court, which was jointly established by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations.

As we all know, the Court will conclude its work in September 2013. Its legacy is vast: the indictment of a head of State while still in office and his arrest, at a time many deemed inappropriate, have shown that arresting those who massacre civilians so as to seize or remain in power is indeed possible and effective, and that this serves the cause of peace and justice.

That is a lesson that can be applied to other cases, such as that of Bosco Ntaganda, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who formerly was a pillar of the Congrès national pour la défense du people but today is a henchman of the M-23 movement. Among the historic decisions of the Court, we note the judgement of Charles Taylor, of 30 May 2012, on which the Council has expressed its views. We welcome the jurisprudence of the Court on sensitive issues, including the recruitment of child soldiers and forced marriage.

The capacity of the Court to transfer its activities to a residual mechanism and to national courts will also be valuable as an example for other special courts. We noted the particular concerns expressed with respect to ensuring the long-term protection of witnesses. That is a key concern for all of the international criminal courts.

Lastly, we wish to highlight the assessment, financed by the European Union and described in the report, which underscores that more than 75 per cent of the people of Sierra Leone and of Liberia believe that the Tribunal has advanced the cause of justice and that an even greater number believe that the Court has served the cause of peace. These are numbers that we will need to bear in mind when, in several days, we will hold our debate on international justice. When the

Security Council enables justice to take its course by doing what is necessary and by ensuring full compliance with its resolutions, justice, in turn, can serve the cause of stability.

Today we have in place a standing system of justice with the International Criminal Court (ICC), which the Council can resort to, under Chapter VII of the Charter, at any time and on any situation. This makes the creation of new special courts obsolete in the areas of the ICC's jurisdiction: war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

The inception and the activities of the Court have illustrated the at times tragic interplay of the history of the neighbouring countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone and the manner in which the fragility of one country can affect another. But it also shows how the United Nations can contribute, by means of holistic strategies, to putting an end to crises. The Security Council was for instance able to assess, during its visit to Sierra Leone last May, the progress made: the holding of elections in November, democratic oversight, non-interference on the part of the army, the success of demobilization efforts and economic growth. There is no doubt that the Court has also contributed to those developments.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I should like to welcome to the Council today the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Shireen Fisher, and the Prosecutor, Brenda Hollis, as well as the Court's Registrar, Binta Mansaray, and the head of the Defence Office, Clare Carlton-Hanciles. I thank them for their briefings, and I congratulate them and their staff for the significant achievements of the Special Court to date. We are grateful for their dedication and commitment to the pursuit of justice.

I should like also to thank Guatemala for having scheduled this briefing today and to welcome the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone to the Council.

Today's briefings come at a pivotal juncture, as the Special Court moves towards the end of the final phase of its mandate, the extensive appeals process in the Charles Taylor case. The Special Court has been instrumental in contributing to peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

By creating a transparent and independent judicial process, the Court has brought justice and provided accountability for the people of Sierra Leone and has helped them to move on from a painful chapter in their history and that of the region.

The Special Court, moreover, has broken new ground in the field of international criminal law, including through its jurisprudence on the use of child soldiers and its recognition that sexual slavery can be a war crime and a crime against humanity. It has also shown a powerful commitment to gender issues and to combating gender-based violence. We particularly appreciate that as we mark the twelfth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security this month.

Although the trial proceedings in the Charles Taylor case have finished, the work of the Court is not yet done. We therefore welcome the finalization of the agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the establishment of a Residual Court that will come into existence after the conclusion of the appeals process. Its important responsibilities will include witness protection, investigations and trials for contempt, oversight of prisoners and the handling of archives.

The United States was instrumental in the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We have appreciated the opportunity to serve on the Special Court's management committee and commend the work of the Commitee's Canadian Chair and United Kingdom co-Chair. We are proud to have been the Court's largest financial supporter, contributing more than $83 million since its inception, including a recent $2 million disbursement for fiscal year 2012. Given those contributions, we especially appreciate the efforts of President Fisher and Registrar Mansaray to reduce costs, to improve efficiency in the Special Court's operations and to lay the groundwork for an efficient and successful Residual Special Court.

The United States welcomes the broad financial support that the Court has enjoyed so far. That must continue for the Court to complete its critical mandate. President Fisher has reported a projected budget shortfall of $15 million to conclude the Court's work. The United States will endeavour to contribute towards closing that gap and urges the continued support of the international community to both the Court and the Residual Special Court so that justice is served and impunity not tolerated and so that Sierra Leone and the region can move forward in peace and security.

The Government of Sierra Leone has been a strong and committed partner of the Court. We fully support the Court's efforts to transfer its institutional knowledge to the Sierra Leone authorities. It is important to the country's ongoing democratic development that all lessons of the past be fully absorbed. The Special Court has much to offer in that regard. Once the Court completes its mandate, the international community will, of course, continue its support for peacebuilding and long-term socioeconomic development in Sierra Leone.

The Special Court has built a powerful legacy of fighting impunity and of working to bring justice to the people of Sierra Leone. The United States looks forward to the successful completion of the Court's work and the smooth transition to the Residual Special Court.

Ms. Guo Xiaomei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Let me begin by thanking President Fisher and Prosecutor Hollis for their respective briefings on the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. I would also like to thank the Deputy Minister for her statement.

We note that since 2009 the Special Court has continued to make substantive progress in its work. The judgment in the final major case has entered its last stage. The Special Court will become the first international criminal tribunal to complete its mandate and close its doors. We acknowledge the efforts made by the Court over the years. We trust that its positive achievements will serve as a reference for other international tribunals.

The Chinese Government has always supported the work of the Special Court. We note that, in accordance with the agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone, when the Special Court's work concludes, the small-scale Residual Special Court will come into operation.

We expect the Special Court and the Residual Special Court to continue to cooperate with the Government of Sierra Leone and to contribute to the lasting peace and national reconciliation of that country and the region through their judicial and other activities. To that end, we hope that the countries that are in a position to do so will continue to provide financial support to the Special Court, the Residual Special Court, Sierra Leone and the other countries concerned.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): At the outset, allow me to thank the President and the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for their comprehensive briefings today. I would also like to welcome and to thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone for her statement.

We fully agree with the preceding interventions, which have highlighted the important role that the Special Court has played in providing justice and in fighting impunity. In the spirit of note 507 by the President on the Council's working methods (S/2010/507) and in order to avoid repeating contents, I will spare members the delivery of yet another statement. Our full statement is being circulated.

Allow me, however, to thank the President and the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for their efforts. I would also like to thank all those who work or have worked with the Court in ensuring that the mission entrusted to it will come to a successful end very soon.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Guatemala.

We are grateful for the information provided by the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, The Honourable Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, and by the Court's Prosecutor, Brenda Hollis. We also appreciate the presentation today of Her Excellency Mrs. Ebun Jusu, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, and we thank her for her statement.

We are pleased to hear of the achievements of the Special Court for Sierra Leone over the years, and we wish to commend its members on their important work. Guatemala, which is also emerging from an armed conflict, recognizes the important and valuable role of such a court in fighting impunity and in enforcing justice in the country.

We recognize the important contribution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone to national and international criminal justice through its legal proceedings against those individuals who bear the greatest responsibility for the serious violations of international humanitarian law and of Sierra Leone's national law committed since 30 November 1996.

We also underscore the Court's contribution to national reconciliation and to the restoration and maintenance of peace in Sierra Leone and in its region.

We applaud its historic contribution to the understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, reflected in its jurisprudence and its treatment of survivors as participants in post-conflict justice.

We look forward to the final outcome of the Charles Taylor case, a paradigm case in the international criminal justice sphere, expected to conclude by 30 September, 2013.

We recognize the complex work that the Court has been conducting since its establishment in 2002 and look forward to the successful completion of its duties in September 2013. In that regard, we urge that the transition process is orderly and effective and that the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone performs its duties in a timely and efficient manner.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

> "The Security Council expresses its warm appreciation to the President and Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for their briefing to the Security Council on 9 October 2012.
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> "The Security Council reiterates its strong support for the Special Court and commends the progress the Special Court has achieved. The Security Council particularly notes the contribution of the Special Court to strengthening stability in Sierra Leone and the subregion and bringing an end to impunity.
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> "The Security Council congratulates the Special Court on the completion of the trial proceedings in the case of Charles Taylor on 30 May 2012. The Security Council takes note of the commencement of appellate proceedings in the case of Charles Taylor and the projected schedule for the completion of those appellate proceedings by 30 September 2013.
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> "The Security Council also acknowledges the Special Court's progress towards completion. The Security Council underlines its expectation that all organs of the Special Court will do their utmost to finish the remaining work of the Court, including any contempt cases, in accordance with the completion strategy.
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> "The Security Council commends the important outreach activities of the Special Court in bringing its judicial work to the attention of the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia, and thereby contributing to the restoration of the rule of law throughout those countries and the region.
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> "The Security Council commends the Special Court for the important contribution made to international criminal justice concerning the crimes within its jurisdiction, namely, crimes against humanity, serious violations of article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, as well as certain crimes under Sierra Leonean law, and recognizes its work in the areas of women, peace and security, and the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through its outreach and witness support programmes.
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> "The Security Council recognizes the need to address residual matters after the closure of the Court, including the supervision of the enforcement of sentences for convicted persons, the protection of witnesses, and the preservation of the archives of the Special Court. In this regard, the Security Council welcomes the Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone.
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> "The Security Council urges the international community to continue to support the Special Court as it moves into its final stage of work.
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> "The Security Council in particular takes note of the Special Court's ongoing and urgent need for financial support. The Security Council emphasizes the vital need for further pledges of voluntary contributions in order to allow the Special Court to complete its mandate in a timely manner. The Security Council calls upon Member States to contribute generously to the Special Court and for the implementation of the Agreement establishing the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, and encourages the Secretary-General to cooperate with the Registrar of the Special Court in order to find practicable solutions to address the needs of the Residual Special Court in the most efficient and effective manner.
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> "The Security Council will continue to offer strong support to the Special Court as it nears

the completion of its mandate and to the Residual Special Court as it commences its functioning."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/21.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m